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# ESSAYS AND LETTERS

BANKIM CHANDRA CHATTERJEE

Editor .

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## PREFACE

This is a collection of Bankim's miscellaneous writings in English. These comprise papers read by him before learned societies, articles published in magazines, letters written in a controversy on the Hindu religion, a translation of several chapters of his novel *Devi Chaudhurani*, and some private letters of more than passing interest. All of these had been previously published but lay scattered in several periodicals and volumes, and information about each of them has been here appended to satisfy the curiosity of the reader.

The Editors here take the opportunity to thank their friends who have helped them in their task, and in particular Dr. Nihar-ranjan Ray, Mr. Jitendra Nath Bose and Mr. Jogesh Chandra Bagal, without whose co-operation some of the most important matters printed in this volume would have been inaccessible to them.



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**ON THE ORIGIN OF HINDU FESTIVALS**

This paper written by Bankim Chandra was read before the Bengal Social Science Association at a meeting held on 20th January, 1869, which was presided over by the Hon'ble Mr. Justice Phcar. After the paper was read, a lively discussion ensued in which the Rev. J. Long, Mr. Woodrow and Mr. Beverley participated. The President expressed the thanks of the Association for the valuable material placed before the meeting by the lecturer who, he hoped, would prosecute his investigations still further.

The paper was subsequently published in the Transactions of the Association for 1869, Vol. III, pp. 61-67.

Some attention has been paid to the subject of Hindu festivals, and there is among the records of the Transactions of this Association a paper on the nature of Hindu festivals \* I wish to say a few words on their origin It is my impression that most Hindu festivals were not in their origin at all similar to what they are now, and if we could trace their origin in every case satisfactorily, we should have the key to interesting phenomena in the various phases of social existence which the nation has gone through It is impossible to venture on any *general* theory regarding their origin Particular festivals appear to have had each a particular origin, quite different in its principle from the origin of others Again, it is by no means clear that every festival has had its origin in the earlier stages of Hindu society Some are, doubtless, very old, but others are extremely modern

It is certain that many festivals which have now assumed the shape and adopted the symbols of the worship of particular gods, were in their origin nothing more than the celebration of the advent of particular seasons of the year, or of other physical phenomena, and had *no religious element* in them at the beginning Take the Dol Jatra, for instance It is now in Bengal only a special mode of worshipping Krishna on a particular day Up country it is the *Huli*, as the word is mis written and mis pronounced Originally, it was nothing but a festival in honour of spring, *Vasantotsaba* From *Vasantotsaba* it degenerated into *Madanotsaba*, or the festival of love, and then the religious element first crept in It is strange that that season of the year when the fresh bursting forth of nature into new life, and into forms of pure and stainless beauty, is calculated to dispose the mind towards the highest and the calmest moods, should be set down by the poets and the people of India as peculiarly the season of love and desire Being so set down, spring came to be indissolubly associated with love and desire, not that love which is high, holy as an abnegation of self, even when man or his companion is the object, but love which levels man to the brute The

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\* "The Festivals of the Hindus" by Kissory Chand Mitra published in the Transactions of the Association for 1868, Vol II, pp 107 124 [Ed ]

association was so strong, that whenever a Hindu poet happens to touch on spring, he speaks of it only in one aspect—as the season of love. Not even the highest and most cultivated minds which Puranic India ever produced were free from this peculiarity. Even in the finest passage in all the poetical literature of India, perhaps of the East, the third canto of the Kumar Sambhava, where the poetry often rises into strains of loftiness and grandeur rarely attained, it sinks into the earth when the poet comes to describe spring. He is tender, he is touching, his exquisite and trembling sensibility reflects every shade of the new life of Nature; but the leading idea throughout the description is still that of the season of love and desire. It was natural, therefore, that the festival of spring should transform itself into the festival of love; and as love was the god Madana, the festival became one for the worship of Madana. The red powder and the squirt, which form the distinguishing features of the Huli, were also the ancient accompaniments of the Madanotsaba, and we find them all in the description of that festival given in the Ratnavali. When Madana came to give place to Krishna, and the Madanotsaba came to be transformed into the Dol Jatra in Bengal, I am unable to say; but it was naturally to be expected that the god whose worship came to be the most popular in the country, and the memory of whose amorous achievements better fitted him to represent love and loose morals than Madana himself, should supplant the latter in popular festivals.

Take, again, the festivals in honour of Lakshmi. Lakshmi is the goddess of prosperity; but the word "Lakshmi," or "Sri," which is another name for the divinity, also means prosperity itself, or wealth. In early times, when agriculture was the only and the direct source of wealth, wealth differed little in popular idea from the produce of a good harvest. Now, we find that there are four festivals in honour of Lakshmi; or, in other words, there are four seasons during which she is worshipped. The first is in autumn, after the Durga Puja, just before the winter harvest commences. We find her next worshipped in Pous, just as the winter crop has been, or has nearly been, gathered in. We find her again worshipped at the end of Choitra, just before the first rains are expected, and the early rice crop is about to be sown. Lastly, we find her worshipped again in Bhadra, just as the early crop has been gathered in. These facts are calculated to lead to the inference that the festivals in honour of Lakshmi were, in their origin, purely

agricultural festivals, and probably had then in them no religious character whatever

Other festivals clearly have an astronomical origin, and are mere representatives of celestial phenomena I shall advert here to some ingenious hints, for which I am indebted to a paper by Babu Bhudeb Mukarji The most important of our festivals, that of Durga, is probably resolvable in this way Indian astronomy or astrology gives to the twelve months of the year the names of the twelve signs of the Zodiac, and each month is named after the sign in which the sun is supposed to be during that month Thus, Baisakh is Mesha, or the Ram, and Jyastha is Brisha, or the Bull Similarly, Aswin, in which this festival is held, is the Virgin *following on the back of Bhadra, the Lion* Now the image worshipped in the Durga Puja is that of a virgin on the back of a lion Durga is not indeed supposed to be a virgin, she is fabled as a married goddess, the wife of Siva and the mother of Ganesa But what may be contended for is not that the present worship is that of a virgin, but that at the original institution of the festival, the worship was that of a virgin in fact, of the constellation Virgo The image actually worshipped even now is that of a *young* female, and Durga, as thereby represented, is popularly described as *sorasi*, or in her sixteenth year Just as it is possible that the obsolete deity Madana gave place to the popular god Krishna, so it is possible that the constellation gave place to an almost equally popular deity Durga

The origin of the festival of Rath is, perhaps, to be explained in the same way This festival takes place about the time of the summer solstice It does not now fall exactly on the day on which the sun is on the solstitial point, or on any fixed solar date, but the variation must be owing to the substitution of lunar for solar dates, which is the general rule for regulating the recurrence of festivals It is not improbable that originally the date of its celebration was regulated according to the solar calendar, though now it has been made to conform to the general rule Now, the plain facts regarding the phenomenon of the solstice are that the sun, in its apparent annual motion, approaches a certain point in the heaven, seems stationary there for a short time, and then recedes again towards the equator In Hindu mythology, the sun is represented as moving in the heaven in a car, or *rath* And so his car, or *rath*, is represented on earth, and made to conform to his motions in the heavens At the same time that the sun moves

in the heavens towards the solstice, stops there for a short time, and then recedes, his car on earth is in the same way made to move to a certain place, kept there for eight days, and then taken back in the same direction from which it was originally moved. It is true, Jagannath now rides the car, not the sun. But, like Madana and the Virgin, he has probably been made to give place to a more popular deity than himself.

It may be said that if there be any foundation for this theory of the origin of this festival, there ought to be found a corresponding festival in celebration of the winter solstice; and so there is the *Makar Sankranti*. This, unlike the other, is regulated by the solar, and not the lunar calendar. The reason why this festival escaped being made to conform to the general rule, probably is that it falls on the last day of a month, and is thus of a class which forms the only known exception to the general lunar rule. Even, however, with the unchanged date, it does not fall on the exact date which corresponds with the solstice. But my theory, that this is a solstitial festival, would be wrong if the two dates coincided. We must take into account the effect of the precession of the equinoxes. If they coincided at the original institution of the festival, they cannot coincide now, for the *Sankranti* is a day fixed by the calendar. The difference at present is one of 21 days. At the rate of  $50'' \cdot 1$  for a year, nearly fifteen centuries must have elapsed since the institution of this festival, to account for the difference. So that if you accept the supposition, this festival must have been instituted towards the latter end of the fourth century after Christ,—as probable a date as any other.

On the *Makar Sankranti* the sun's car is not represented on the earth, as in the festival of the summer solstice; but one of the names given to the day succeeding the festival leaves no doubt that it is a solstitial festival. It is called the *Uttarayana Dina*, or the day on which the sun starts on his northern course. And in some places, though not in all, the sun is the only deity worshipped on the *Makar Sankranti*. Mr. Long, in the five hundred questions on Indian subjects, which he put in a paper read before the Royal Asiatic Society, asks “why is the sun the only deity worshipped on that day ?” The answer is now clear; it is because the festival is a solstitial festival. I do not think that the answer could have been given on any other supposition.

I am aware that another, and a very reasonable, account of the origin

of the festival of Rath has been given by General Cunningham in his work on the Bhilai Topes. He there traces it to a similar festival of the Buddhists, in which the three symbols of the Buddhist faith, Buddha, Dharmma, and Sangha, were drawn in a car in the same fashion, and I believe about the same season as the Rath. It is a fact greatly in support of the theory, that the images of Jagannath, Balaram, and Subhadra, which now figure in the Rath, are near copies of the representations of Buddha, Dharmma, and Sangha, and appear to have been modelled upon them. The details of the evidence in support of this supposition will be found in the work of General Cunningham, to which I have referred. That evidence is by no means conclusive, and it is possible that the Buddhists themselves may have transformed an astronomical commemoration into a religious one.

The name of the festival of the Rasjatra would also seem to point to an astronomical origin. The word is derived apparently from "Rasi," a sign of the Zodiac. As to what its precise meaning may be, I am unable to offer any opinion. This festival seems to be the autumnal counterpart of the vernal festival in honour of Spring, and may have had a similar origin. The vernal festival is celebrated on the day or night of the full moon of the season, the autumnal festival is also celebrated on a similar night in autumn. So there is a summer festival, the Phul dol, celebrated on a full moon night in summer, and there is a rainy season festival, the Jhulan, falling on a full moon night in the rainy season. All these four festivals were probably in their origin festivals merely in honour of the respective seasons, and had no necessary connexion with religion. They are now all religious festivals in honour of Krishna. It is to be observed, also, that there are these full moon festivals for only four of the six seasons into which Hindus divide the year. There are none for the two divisions of the cold season. The reason is obvious. A spring night, or a summer night, or an autumnal night, with a splendid full moon lighting up the earth and heavens, is a very proper season for festivity, and such a night, even during the rainy season, may be so if the sky happens to be clear on the particular day. But a black night in December or January, with a full and chilly moon appearing to render the cold night colder, however agreeable to those accustomed to the climate of Europe, appears to have been thought by the children of the soil as little inviting to festive proceedings, and I for one should consider them wise in their opinion.

Another festival, that of Kartick, is, I am inclined to think, also of astronomical origin. The name of the god, as well as the name of the month in which he is worshipped, is clearly derived from that of a star, "Nakshatra Krithika." Kartick is fabled in the Purans as the son, born or adopted, of Uma or Durga, the sister of the twenty-seven Nakshatras. May it not be that he was probably originally fabled as the son, not of a sister of the stars, but of one of those stars themselves, that from which he derives his name; and mythology, coming after astronomy, transferred the mothership to its favourite goddess? If so, the process must have been something analogous to the following: Kartick must have originally signified nothing more than a festival in honour of Krithika; then it probably led to the supposition of a god who represented Krithika in the festival as her son, and lastly Kartick came to be the son of Uma, the sister of Krithika. But I admit that the conjecture is too remote to be of any weight.

If there be any truth in the foregoing suppositions, Hindu festivals may, in regard to their origin, be classified as follows:—

1. Solstitial festivals, *viz.*, the Rath and the Makar Sankranti.
2. Astral festivals, as the Durga Puja and the Kartick Puja.
3. Season festivals, as the Dol Jatra and the three other full-moon festivals.
4. Agricultural festivals, which are in honour of Lakhsmi, the Hindu Ceres.
5. Mythological festivals, like the Kali Puja and the Jugaddhatri, which appear to be the most modern of all.
6. Lastly, festivals which apparently owe their origin to the popular dread of some physical agent of mischief, as the *Manasa* festival, celebrated to propitiate snakes.

In the whole range of Hindu festivals, I have been unable to trace any to a historical origin. Indeed, historical festivals can scarcely be expected to be found among a nation devoid of historical associations.

There are, however, many festivals which cannot at present be attributed to any of the sources which I have enumerated—the Dewali, for instance. This festival indeed is, from its nature, one of the most interesting. Its principal feature consists in the rows of lights with which houses are decorated on the night of its occurrence; and what gives it its interest, is that accompanying circumstances seem to show that it must have had its rise

in some peculiar and remarkable event or idea. Thus, we find it is celebrated in the month of Kartick, and this month is held peculiarly sacred to light. During the whole month, lights are hung up on a pole on the top of every house. During the same month, ghats are lighted up with splendid rows of lamps in Benares and other places up-country. During the same month young females light little lamps and send them floating down the stream of the river—an act which very often typifies their own journey down the stream of the world. I confess that the origin of these and other usages have for me a greater interest than the origin of the festivals themselves. Some of these usages are easily intelligible. It is easy to understand why grain should be worshipped with Lakshmi, and books and musical instruments with Saraswati, the goddess of knowledge and of music. Purple powder is used in the Huli, probably because that may be supposed to be the colour of nature at the time, decorating herself with new leaves. Bhang is taken on the day after the Durga Puja, because that is supposed to be a very auspicious day, and the name of the drug—*siddhi*—signifies success, which is supposed to be imbibed with the drug for the whole year. But other usages are more curious and more difficult to understand. Why this profusion of lights in Kartick? Why are people obliged to swallow, without chewing, a bit of ginger with a bit of plantain, on the day of the Dusahara? Why should Manasa be worshipped in *an oven*? Mythology throws no light on these questions; popular superstitions throw no light. They are clearly attributable to ideas and associations, which are now matter of the past.

Whatever that may be, it is my belief that most of the festivals and usages connected with them, at all events all the older festivals, had in their origin no necessary connection with religion, and their present religious character is owing to the later Puranic superstition. I leave it to the public to estimate the effect which would be produced on their observance, if this truth, if such it is, could be clearly established to the conviction of those who observe them.



A POPULAR LITERATURE FOR BENGAL

This paper written by Bankim Chandra was read before the Bengal Social Science Association on 28th February, 1870. It was followed by a lively discussion in which Peary Chand Mittra and Dr. S. G. Chuckerbutty participated.

The paper was subsequently published in the Transactions of the Association for 1870, Vol. IV, pp. 38-43.



of social reform, remain stone-deaf to all our eloquence. To me it seems that a single great idea, communicated to the people of Bengal in their own language, circulated among them in the language that alone touches their hearts, vivifying and permeating the conceptions of all ranks, will work out grander results than all that our English speeches and preachings will ever be able to achieve. And therefore it is that I venture to draw the attention of this Association to a subject of such social importance as a literature for the people of Bengal.

A popular literature for Bengal is just blundering into existence. It is a movement which requires to be carefully studied and wisely stimulated, for it may exert a healthy or a pernicious influence on the national character, according to the direction it takes. The popular literature of a nation and the national character act and react on each other. At least in Bengal there has been a singular harmony of character between the two since the days of Vidyapati and Jaydeva. Jaydeva was the popular poet of his age and the age which followed him. It may seem absurd to say so now, but it must be remembered that all who read at that period, read in Sanskrit; and, besides, Jaydeva's poems used to be sung, as they are even at the present day.

And it would be difficult to conceive a poem more typical than the *Gitagovinda* of the Bengali character as it had become after the iron heel of the Musalman tyrant had set its mark on the shoulders of the nation. From the beginning to the end it does not contain a single expression of manly feeling—of *womanly* feeling there is a great deal—or a single elevated sentiment. The poet has not a single new *truth* to teach. Generally speaking, it is the poets (religious or profane) who teach us the great moral truths which render man's life a blessing to his kind; but Jaydeva is a poet of another stamp. I do not deny him high poetical merits in a certain sense, exquisite imagery, tender feeling and unrivalled power of expression, but that does not make him less the poet of an effeminate and sensual race. Soft and mellifluous, feelingly tender and as often grossly sensual, his exquisitely sounding but not unfrequently meaningless verse echoed the common sentiments of an inactive and effeminate race. And since then all Bengalis who have ventured on original composition have followed in his footsteps. The same words may be used to describe the writings of Madhava, the second best of the Bengali Sanskrit poets. The writings of the poets who wrote under the patronage of the Nuddea Raja were the same in

character, and worse perhaps, for they had all the faults of Jaydeva in an exaggerated form and but few of his redeeming beauties. Till lately, the Bidya Sundar, the best known production of that age, continued to be the most popular book in all Bengali literature. After the Nuddea poets, we come to the day of the *kabis*, *jatras* and love-songs, the only species of literary composition to which the nation confined itself for generations. And fit intellectual food they were for a race who had become incapable of comprehending any other class of conceptions !

Along with this species of poetical literature, Bengal was developing within itself two other systems which were the peculiar property of the Bengali intellect—Law and the Nyaya Philosophy. The Bengali had lost all dignity of character and all manliness; but he had not lost his acuteness of intellect. So from the days of Kulluka Bhatta to those of Jagannath volume after volume and commentary after commentary were written to interpret and expand and alter and mystify a system of law, which already in the hands of its original framers had gone beyond the proper limits of legislative interference, and set unbearable restraints on individual freedom of action. And this unlimited expansion and development of an already ponderous system of law, or rather of law and religion welded into one solid mass, tended only to multiply *ad infinitum* the iron bonds under which the Bengali already groaned—until all his pleasures and his aspirations became restricted to his hookah and his love-songs. In weightier matters the spiritual guide and the interpreter of law regulated, even still regulates, his destiny.

And the splendid Nyaya Philosophy which flourished side by side with it, and to have matured and developed which constitutes the sole claim of Bengal to intellectual pre-eminence in any department over the other provinces of India, had little influence on the people, for it did not reach them. It was to them an unintelligible jargon with which they had no concern, which nobody cared to interpret to them, and the inherent rationalism of which therefore remained a secret with its exclusive professors. What a blow to the immense mass of Bengali superstition would that philosophy have been, if it had been allowed to see the day ! But the only effect which it had on the destinies of the people was the importation of its subtleties into the endless mazes of Hindu law, and its endowment with a borrowed strength which it never could have commanded of itself.

And thus the national character and the productions of the national intellect acted and reacted on each other. Indolent habits and a feeble moral organization gave birth to an effeminate poetical literature; and then for ages the country fed and nourished itself on that effeminate literature. The acute but uncreative intellect of the Bengali delighted to lose itself in the subtle distinctions of the law, and he indulged in the favourite pastime till he had succeeded in making his own bonds tighter and more intimate.

And so the Bengali stood, crushed and spiritless, insensible to his own wrongs, till a new light dawned on him, to rouse him, if that were possible, from his state of lethargy. And with this new dawn of life came into the country one of the mightiest instruments of civilization, the printing-press. Gradually the change set in, and a demand began to be made for a literature of another character than that of the *Gitagovinda* school. It is not my wish to pursue the history of the national mind any further, for the facts are known to all. It is my object to point out to those who wish to bestow attention on the subject, *first*, that there is already a certain demand for a popular literature for Bengal, and that the demand is likely to be greater very speedily; *secondly*, that both the quantity and *quality* of the supply is of vital importance to the community; *lastly*, that, whatever the quantity is, the quality is very inferior at present.

If you will look over the quarterly returns published by Government, you will find that the Bengali mind is anything but unproductive. But its productions are remarkable for quantity alone; the quality is on an average contemptible—often they are positively injurious. Excepting a few books of recognized excellence, they are, when they are nothing more mischievous, either clumsy imitations of good Bengali models, or abject copies of the silly stories of the later Sanskrit writers, or a string of harmless commonplaces. I beg leave to point out two causes as conducive to this state of things.

The first is the disinclination of the more educated classes to write for their country in their own language. Authorship is with us still the vocation of the needy and fawning Pundit, or the ambitious school-boy, or the idle scribbler who must needs be an author simply because he cannot be anything else. Those who can teach their country, consider it beneath their social position to do so. It is degrading for the dashing young Bengali who writes and talks English like an Englishman, to be caught writing a Bengali

book And if anything induces him to stoop to this vulgar course, the book comes out stealthily, without the great man's name on the title page, and hence many of our best books are anonymous There are a few honourable exceptions, and these men have done an immense good to Bengali literature It is a fact that the best Bengali books are the productions of Bengalis who are highly cultivated English scholars The matter for regret is how few these books are, and how few the scholars who have written them

The second cause is the absence of sound and intelligent criticism Intelligent criticism may be said to be a thing unknown to the Native Press There is some inherent defect in the Bengali character which renders the task of distinguishing the beautiful and the true from the gaudy and the false a task of even greater difficulty than the higher effort of creation This deficiency in the culture of the cultivated Bengali reacts on the literature The blundering critic often passes a verdict, which, if he happen to be an authority accustomed to command respect on literary matters, misleads by its error and strikes at the root of all excellence Those who have seen, as I have, an audience of Bengali gentlemen sitting patiently to listen for hours to the flash and froth and rant which is poured forth in native theatres, and calling the whole thing a good drama, will doubtless understand why the Bengali drama is so inferior in its character And the same sort of criticism keeps down other branches of literature to the same low level

Another great impediment to the formation of a respectable and readable popular literature for Bengal is the extremely low idea some people entertain of the capacities of the Bengali reading public It is assumed that books intended for them must contain childish stories and information suited to children only and treated in a childish style, or they will not suit the understanding of the adult reading population of Bengal No kind of literary excellence—no sentiments of a manly and elevating character must be permitted to creep into such books, no glimpse of that wondrous world of scientific knowledge which European research has revealed, nothing but its dry details and naked skeleton can be allowed to the Bengali reader He will not understand them, he will not read books which contain such things This idea is a great mistake The fact is that the Bengali will read only such books as contain anything worth reading, and books manufactured on a principle which ignores him as an intellectual being he will not read, and he does not read Our most popular authors have succeeded by following

precisely an opposite course. It is by following the principle of so-called *simple* publications, that so respectable a body as the Vernacular Literature Society have failed to make any contributions to the popular Bengali literature worth the name. It is, however, due to that body to say that the Bengali periodical published under their auspices offers a remarkable exception to this criticism, and that it is the most useful publication of the kind in all Bengali periodical literature.

I have to suggest only another topic in connection with the subject for discussion—the creation of some suitable agencies for the circulation of readable books in the mofussil. Books will doubtless reach the most remote village in the interior when it will pay tradesmen to carry them there, but that day is distant yet. The mofussil mainly depends at present on supplies brought by itinerant hawkers. Their visits are always few and far between; their stock scanty and ill-selected. I mention the subject because I have often heard complaints from residents in the mofussil. The Vernacular Literature Society has special agencies of its own at many places; and these agencies are, I believe, available on certain conditions to the general public for the sale of books not published by the Society, but I am not aware that the public make use of them to any considerable extent. Cannot the system be utilized to a greater extent?

To me it seems that all that can be done at present is the establishment of village Public Libraries. I know that a few such institutions have been already called into existence by public-spirited residents in the mofussil. It is desirable that they should become more general. A beginning may be made in every village where there is a Vernacular or Anglo-Vernacular School. One of the teachers of the school under the supervision of the School-Committee may keep charge of the books, and in the school-house room may be found for the book-shelves. Thus village libraries may be formed at once without more cost than the price of the books and the shelves. Educational officers who travel so much, and officers in the executive and administrative departments who command so much influence, may do much in this direction if they think fit. I do not think the suggestion is one difficult to carry out—it has been already carried out in several places.

## **BENGALI LITERATURE**

This article appeared in *The Calcutta Review* for 1871, No. 104, pp. 294-316. In those days it was customary to publish the articles in *The Calcutta Review* without the names of their contributors. Early in the eighties, the publishers of *The Calcutta Review* arranged to reprint some of the important articles hitherto published in it in a series of volumes entitled *Selections from The Calcutta Review*; a prospectus was thus issued which gave a list of the articles intended for reprint, along with the names of their contributors as ascertained from the office records. We find from this prospectus that Bankim Chandra was the writer of the article on "Bengali Literature" which, however, never appeared in the *Selections*, for reasons not known to us.

*Lives of the Bengali Poets.* By Hari Mohan Mukurjya. Calcutta : New Sanskrit Press. 1869.

*Mitra Prakas.* No. 1. Dacca : 1870.

The intellectual position of the Bengali among the races of India may be a prominent one at the present day, but in earlier times it was one of the lowest. It is a Bengali writer, Babu Rajendralála Mitra, who has said that in ancient times Bengal was the Boetia of India. And the observation is correct. The contributions of Bengal to that ancient Indian literature which still commands the respect and attention of European scholars, were few and insignificant. The only Bengali Sanskrit poet of any eminence was Jayadeva, and he does not stand in the first rank. There is not one Bengali name which can compare with those of Kálidása, Mágha, Bháravi and Sri-harsa. In other departments the only distinguished Bengali name in the older Sanskrit literature is that of Kulluka Bhatta, the commentator on Manu. The great Bengali triumphs in the Nyáya philosophy and in law cannot be reckoned as falling within this period. The names of Raghunandana and Jagannátha belong to very recent days.

It is difficult to determine the date of the oldest Bengali writers, but probably few of their books are more than three hundred years old. Vidyápati, whose lyrics are perhaps the finest in the language, is certainly one of the first. Mukundarám Chakravarti, commonly known as Kabi Kankan, and the author of the *Chandi* poems, lived during the reign of Akbar. The *Chaitanya Charitamrita* is also one of the oldest Bengali books. But, however uncertain their exact date may be, the literary productions of Bengal naturally group themselves into five separate classes, different in spirit and to some extent successive in order of time; and, if this be borne in mind, the want of exact dates need cause no difficulty in understanding the brief criticisms which follow.

The first in order are the lyric poets, at the head of whom must be placed Vidyápati. They are exclusively Vaisnavite, and their songs either celebrate the amours of Krishna or the holiness of Chaitanya. They are still sung by bands of Bairágis and are popularly known under the name of

*kirttan*. Their number is immense. The present writer has in his possession a collection which contains more than three thousand of these songs, and he believes that there are other collections equally voluminous. The music to which they are set is peculiar, and is not ordinarily understood even by the professional musicians of Bengal. These, in fact, profess to hold *kirttan* music in utter contempt, but it nevertheless possesses a sweetness and pathos not ordinarily found in Indian music. The effect, however, is often marred by the discordant sound of the cymbals and drums by which it is accompanied. But if the music is peculiar, the language is no less so. Many of these songs are probably very modern, but others are undoubtedly the most ancient extant specimens of the Bengali language; and in these the language is more like the Hindi of Tulsi Dás than the Bengali of the present day. Doubtless early Bengali and early Hindi differed little, if at all, from each other, and the present divergence is due to the operation of phonetic change in the same vernacular spoken by different branches of the same race, which were separated from each other by the revolution which followed the breaking up of the great empire of the Guptas of Magadha, or by others which are now lost in the silent darkness of Indian history.

It could scarcely be expected that so immense a collection as this Vaisnavite storehouse should be of uniform merit, and one may well wish that nine-tenths of these songs had never been composed; but among the other one-tenth there are gems of rare merit, which in tenderness of feeling have never been surpassed by anything in Bengali literature, and barely equalled by the best writers of the present day.

This school constitutes the literature of Chaitanyaism, while the second we have to notice represents Bengali Pauranism. The principal productions of this school are the Bengali version of the Mahábhárata and the Rámáyana. Their authors, Kásidás and Krittibás, were not mere translators of the great Indian epics. They did not attempt so much in one sense, yet they achieved something more. Taking the story and the matter in general from their great originals, they gave free scope to their own fancy, and in many places established a claim to originality. We do not mean to say that they improved upon the originals, unless it were by greatly curtailing the tremendous bulk of the Sanskrit compositions; but the new matter which they added, while it detracts from the grandeur of the original conceptions of the Sanskrit poets, would, if embodied in some other form, have given them a certain

position among original writers Mukundaram Chakravariti—Kabi Kankan—though he followed no Sanskrit original, belongs to the same school, and deservedly enjoys a higher reputation than either Krittibas or Kasidas. Many passages of his book are touchingly beautiful, but we cannot afford space for extracts. The language of these poets shows no traces of Hindi, but it is still very different from modern Bengali. In poetic power they are decidedly inferior to the best of the Vaisnava poets.

The third class of writers we shall notice are those who flourished under the Nuddea Raja, Krishna Chandra. They enjoy an undeserved celebrity, and are, in our opinion, a very worthless set. The best known among them is Bharat Chandra Ray, who was till lately considered the best of the Bengali poets,—an opinion not yet wholly eradicated, but fast losing ground. Bharat Chandra is chiefly known by his *Vidya Sundara* and his *Annada Mangal*. Neither work has much merit, though an exception must be made in favour of the character of Hira, the flower girl, a coarse but racy and vigorous portrait, not equalled by anything of its kind in Bengali. One other great distinction, however, must be accorded to Bharat Chandra. He is the father of modern Bengali. His versification, too, is very good, and it is the model followed by many distinguished poets of the present day, as, for instance, Babu Ranga Lal Banerji. In the higher attributes of a poet, Bharat Chandra is far inferior to many who have preceded and followed him. His works are disfigured, too, by a disgusting obscenity which unsuits them for republication at a time when Bengali readers are not all of the rougher sex.

There is perhaps nothing more lamentable in the whole history of literature than the school of Bengali writers who followed the Nuddea poets and preceded the present generation. There is scarcely any readable work (readable even in the sense in which Bharat Chandra's poems are readable) belonging to that age—the age of the *Naba Babu Bilas* and the *Prabodha Chandrika*, as for literary filth, there never was a more copious supply. Happily, the whole mass of rubbish has vanished from public recollection.

To this period belongs the well known *kabi*, of which the wealthy Hindus of the last generation were so passionately fond, and on which they lavished immense sums of money. The *kabi* was a series of songs not often much connected with each other, sung by two opposite bands of performers. Each sought to abuse the other, and the more pungent the abuse,

the greater was the triumph of the abuser and the pleasure of the listeners. The singing was generally the most execrable to which human folly has ever given the name of music, though in a few cases the airs were sweet and elegant. The matter was often either commonplace or laboured extravagance, though among the songs of Ram Basu, Haru Thakur and Nitai Das, there are some of peculiar excellence. The following prose translation is from one of those most popular in the present day. It may be called *The Young Wife's Lament*, and it will be understood only by those who know the very young Bengali wife, who has learned to love but is too timid to speak :

'It is the spring of the year, and it is the spring of my life;  
 And the lord of my life has left me for a far distant land.  
 He came to me with a smile and told me he would go :  
 I saw that smile, and that smile filled my eyes with tears.  
 I could not let him go ; my heart would have made him stay ;  
 But shame said, " Fie ! do not, do not keep him back."  
 So the sorrow of my heart is within my heart shut up.  
 I would have told it to him when he went to the far-off land ;  
 But when I was about to speak, I could not.'

We have preferred to give this specimen rather than others of superficial merit, because it is the most popular *kabi* among Bengalis at the present day.

There is one other writer—himself a class—whom we wish to notice before we proceed to consider the present state of Bengali literature. We mean Iswar Chandra Gupta. He stands between the past and the present, and singularly illustrates the literary poverty of the age in which he lived and the progress that has been made within the last few years. A dozen years have not elapsed since Iswar Chandra Gupta died, yet we speak of him as belonging to a past era; so essentially does he differ from the most prominent writers of the present day.

He was a very remarkable man. He was ignorant and uneducated. He knew no language but his own, and was singularly narrow and unenlightened in his views; yet for more than twenty years he was the most popular author among the Bengalis. As a writer of light satiric verse, he occupies the first place, and he owed his success both as a poet and as her editor to this special gift. But there his merits ended. Of the high qualities of a poet he possessed none, and his work was extremely rude a

uncultivated. His writings were generally disfigured by the grossest obscenity. His popularity was chiefly owing to his perpetual alliteration and play upon words. We have purposely noticed him here in order to give the reader an idea of the literary capacity and taste of the age in which a poetaster like Iswar Chandra Gupta obtained the highest rank in public estimation. And we cannot even say that he did not deserve to be placed in the highest rank among his Bengali contemporaries, for he was a man of some literary talent, while none of the others possessed any. However much we may lament the poverty of Bengali literature, the last fifteen years have been a period of great progress and hope; within that time at least a dozen writers have arisen, every one of whom is immensely superior, in whatever is valuable in a writer, to this—the most popular of their predecessors.

Strange as it may appear, this obscure and often immoral writer was one of the precursors of the modern Brahmins. The charge of obscenity and immorality mainly applies to his poetry. His prose is generally free from both vices, and often advocates the cause of religion and morality. We extract the following passage from the prose portion of the *Hita Prabhākar* to illustrate his Brahmonic tendencies. His acquaintance with the leading tenets of the ancient Indian systems of philosophy ought not to surprise anyone, even though we have said that he was uneducated; for they were pretty well known to most Bengalis of the same amount of culture in a generation which is fast dying out.

'O Lord there is none among men who can discover what Thou art ! Art Thou formless or form ? How may I know what Thou art ! No man can tell whether even Thou knowest Thyself, for art Thou not the Unknowable ? What name can I give Thee, but Thou ? What else can I call Thee ? Shall I call Thee the conditioned or the unconditioned ? The active or the inactive ? The unmade or the maker ? The sum of all qualities or the absolute ? The one alone or the aggregate of all ? What shall I call Thee ? Who will tell me what I shall call Thee ? Philosophers have not seen the end. The Shastras do not agree. One teaches one thing, and another teaches another. \* \* \* \* Each has gone as far as his powers lead him, but the indescribable could not be described, and no eye of human knowledge could reach so far as where Thou went. O Father, what is this which calls itself Me ? I know not myself; how then can I know Thee ? Who is this I ? Why do I call myself me ? Is it by my own power I call myself me, or is it Thou ? and is the power Thine ?

Say, whose is the power to call myself me, mine or Thine ? Who says it ? Who says what I have said, I or Thou ? Why have I this body ? or is the body mine ? Why has a body been attached to me to make me a corporeal being ? and why is this body self-conscious ? What is this body ? and who am I that inhabit it ! Am I the same being which I was, when I first became myself within this body ?'

Iswar Chandra Gupta is now fast falling into oblivion, and we must proceed to notice the class of writers who have superseded him. But before doing so, we must premise a few words on the present general condition of Bengali literature.

One of the most noticeable characteristics of Bengal at the present day is the large amount of literary activity to be found there in comparison with other parts of India. But while books and newspapers are daily pouring from the press, the quality of our current literature is by no means proportioned to its bulk. In fact, by far the greatest part [of] what is published is absolute rubbish. There are several modern Bengali books of which we shall have to speak in terms of high praise, but the number of these is so small in comparison with the mass of publications yearly vomited forth by the Bengali press, that they go but a little way towards redeeming the character of the whole. We can scarcely expect a better state of things from the class of men who compose the rank and file of Bengali authors and Bengali critics. Authorship in Bengal is the vocation of half-educated scribblers. The educated native has a sort of ultra-utilitarian contempt for the office, and considers himself above writing in his own language. The case of criticism is worse. We can hardly hope for a healthy and vigorous Bengali literature in the utter absence of anything like intelligent criticism. The educated Bengali fails in this department almost as much as the antiquated pundit, in consequence no doubt of deficient culture.

Those who are familiar with the present writers in Bengali, will readily admit that they all, good and bad alike, may be classed under two heads, the Sanskrit and the English schools. The former represents Sanskrit scholarship and the ancient literature of the country; the latter is the fruit of Western knowledge and ideas. By far the greater number of Bengali writers belong to the Sanskrit school; but by far the greater number of good writers belong to the other.

It may be said that there is not at the present day anything like an

indigenous school of writers, owing nothing either to Sanskrit writers or to those of Europe. The Sanskrit school takes for its models the later Sanskrit writers, and they are remarkably deficient in originality. The greater originality of the writers of the English school is the point in which their superiority to the Sanskrit school is most marked. It is characteristic of the Sanskrit school that they seldom venture on original composition. Even Vidyasagar's ambition soars no higher than adaptations and a few translations. When they do venture on original composition, they are rarely caught straying beyond the beaten track, beyond a reverential repetition of things which have been said over and over again from time immemorial. If love is to be the theme, Madana is invariably put into requisition with his five flower-tipped arrows; and the tyrannical king of Spring never fails to come to fight in his cause, with his army of bees, and soft breezes, and other ancient accompaniments. Are the pangs of separation to be sung? The moon is immediately cursed and anathematized, as scorching the poor victim with her cold beams. The Kokila is described as singing him to destruction; and bees and soft breezes and sweet flowers are enumerated in the order in which they were marshalled in prehistoric times. No lovely woman in the pages of these writers has any other form of loveliness than a moon face, lotus eyes, hair that is a cloud, and a nose that resembles Garuda's beak.

In point of style these writers hardly shine more than in ideas. Time-honoured phrases are alone employed; and a dull pompous array of high-sounding Sanskrit words continues to grate on the ear in perpetual recurrence. Anything which bears the mark of foreign origin, however expressive or necessary it may be, is jealously excluded.

It was reserved to Tekchand Thakur to deal the first blow to this insufferable pedantry, and all honour to the man who did it. Endowed as he was with strong common sense as well as high culture, he saw no reason why this idol of unmixed diction should receive worship at his hands, and he set about writing *Aláler Gharer Dulál* in a spirit at which the Sanskritists stood aghast and shook their heads. Going to the opposite extreme in point of style, he vigorously excluded from his works, except on very rare occasions, every word and phrase that had a learned appearance. His own works suffered from the exclusion, but the movement was well-timed. In matter he scattered to the winds the time-honoured commonplaces, and drew upon

nature and life for his materials. His success was eminent and well-deserved.

In Tekchand Thakur's steps followed other writers who met with equal or greater success, among whom we may name Kali Prosunno Singh as a novelist, Michael Madhusudan Datta as a poet, and Dinabandhu Mitra as a dramatist.

There are few Bengalis now living who have a greater claim to our respect than Pundit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar. His exertions in the cause of Hindu widows, the noble courage with which he, a pundit and a professor, first advocated their cause, the patient research and indefatigable industry with which he sought to maintain it, his large-hearted benevolence, and his labours in the cause of vernacular education—all these things combine to place him in the front rank of the benefactors of his country. His claims to the respect and gratitude of his countrymen are many and great, but high literary excellence is certainly not among them. He has a great literary reputation; so had Iswar Chandra Gupta : but both reputations are undeserved, and that of Vidyasagar scarcely less so than that of Gupta. If successful translations from other languages constitute any claim to a high place as an author, we admit them in Vidyasagar's case; and if the compilation of very good primers for infants can in any way strengthen his claim, his claim is strong. But we deny that either translating or primer-making evinces a high order of genius; and beyond translating and primer-making Vidyasagar has done nothing. His brief discourse on Sanskrit literature deserves, and his widow marriage pamphlets claim, no notice here. If we exclude the school-books for children, his translations are five in number :—the *Betál Panchabinsati* from the Hindi; *Sakuntalá*, *Sítár Banabás*, and the introduction to the *Mahábharat* from the Sanskrit; and the *Bhrántibilás* or *Comedy of Errors* from the English. Of these it is enough to say that they are excellent translations or adaptations, better probably than anything else of the same kind in Bengali. The *Sítár Banabás* is as little original as the others. The first chapter is taken from the *Uttara Rámacharita*, Bhavabhuti's noble work; and the remaining three from the *Ramayana* itself, from which Bhavabhuti too drew his inspiration. It is in fact a reproduction, in smooth and flowing but somewhat nerveless language, of scenes selected from Valmiki's poem. The scenes are well chosen, and the expulsion of the supernatural element gives them a more realistic tone, but

Vidyasagar is not free from the tautology and bombast which always disfigure the writers of the school to which he belongs.

The only other writer of the Sanskrit school whom we shall stop to mention, is Pandit Ram Narayan Tarkaratna; and we mention him more on account of his reputation than for any merit to be found in his writings. Among his plays are *Kulin Kulasarbasua*, directed against the evils of Kulinism, and *Naba Natak*, a protest against polygamy. He has also made translations of the *Ratnarali*, the *Malati Madhava* and *Sakuntala*. These translations are execrably bad, and, like his original works, full of bombastic writing. On the whole we consider that this writer's popular reputation is entirely undeserved.

It is with pleasure that we turn from him to the Anglicist school of writers. We have already mentioned Tekchand Thakur, the *nom de plume* of Babu Peary Chand Mitra. His best work is the *Alâler Gharer Dulâl*, which may be said to be the first novel in the Bengali language. The story is extremely simple and may soon be told. Baburam Babu of Baidyabati is an old Kulin Brahman, who has amassed a large fortune by fleecing the suitors in a Court of which he was an employé. He has retired on his gains, and is a zemindar and merchant. He has four children, two sons and two daughters. The eldest son, Mati Lal, is an ignorant, selfish, dissipated young fellow—spoiled from the effect of the over-indulgent treatment of his father. A Gurumahásay who had taught him Bengali, an ignorant Pujari Brahman, employed from motives of economy as Sanskrit tutor, and a retired tailor who instructed him in Persian, laboured, as might have been anticipated, with but indifferent success. The Gurumahásay, after some little time, retired from office in consequence of the playful habits of his pupil, who used to put quicklime in his daily whey, deposit burning embers in the folds of his garments, and indulge in many other like pleasantries. The Pujari resigned because he found it impossible to restrain his scholar's habit of throwing brick-bats at the head of his instructor, as occasion offered. The Munshi's experience as a teacher abruptly closed, on the occasion of his discovering that Mati Lal had amused himself by setting fire to his venerable beard.

Highly gratified with the progress which his son had made in Oriental learning, Baburam Babu now thought it time that he should learn English. So Mati Lal was sent to Calcutta, where he attended an English school. But

he did no more good at English than at Persian and Sanskrit, and preferred to devote his time with other congenial spirits to cards, dice, cock-fighting, kite-flying, and other amusements. At the same time he took to smoking tobacco and charas, as well as to drinking brandy. One day he and his companions were taken up by the police for gambling in a house of ill-fame. They were all convicted and imprisoned, except Mati Lal himself, who got off through the masterly way in which Miyáján Miyá, an old friend of his father, proved an *alibi*. However, this occurrence put an end to Mati Lal's English studies, and he at once returned home and soon afterwards happily married.

In the meantime the younger brother Ram Lal grew up, and followed a totally different path under the care of Baradá Babu, an intelligent and cultivated man. He took kindly to his books, behaved well to his father and other relatives, had a courteous demeanour towards all he met, and was in fact a model of all that a boy should be. But, for some reason or other, Baburam and his friends disapproved of this sort of thing, and determined to get rid of Baradá Babu. The natural way to do this was a criminal charge. So, with the assistance of Miyáján Miyá, a serious charge was made against the unoffending Baradá Babu, who would have paid dearly for his folly in neglecting to fee the amlah, if he had not known English and so been able to put the facts clearly before the magistrate. For when the magistrate had heard so much of the evidence as he could listen to without neglecting his cigar, his newspaper and his private chits, the sherishtadar strongly urged a conviction, and nothing but his knowledge of English saved Baradá Babu and gained him an acquittal.

About this time Baburam Babu, who is a Kulin of high family, receives an offer of marriage likely to bring some money into his pocket, and at once closes with the proposal. Though Mati Lal's mother, a virtuous and affectionate wife, was still living, Baburam married again, and dying soon afterwards, he left two widows, one of them a mere child. Mati Lal now succeeded to the *gadi*, and celebrated his father's *sradhh* in the right fashion. Henceforth, he gave himself up to pleasure, spending money like water on sensual enjoyments of all kinds. His mother remonstrates and receives a blow for her pains, and is obliged to leave the house with her daughter, much to the delight of Mati Lal.

At length, as might have been expected, Mati Lal comes to grief, and

is sold up by his creditors. He leaves home, and having arrived in the course of his wanderings at the city of Benares, he falls in with one of the learned pundits of the place, who works his reformation. There, too, he meets his mother and sister and Barada Babu, who make it up with the repentant sinner, return home with him, and live happily ever after.

This is the simple story of *Alaler Gharer Dulal*, but the mere narrative is the least merit of the book. Its real value lies in the sketches of character and pictures of Bengali life which it contains. Most Europeans know little or nothing of natives beyond what may be learned in our Courts of Justice—places infected by a class of rascals hardly to be found elsewhere, and in which even otherwise honest and truthful men consider themselves entitled to lie, just as they consider themselves entitled to throw aside all regard for caste and for morality in the temple of Vishnu at Puri. A book like this, full of real sketches from life, is, therefore, specially valuable to them. It is true that there may be exaggeration here and there, it is true that, while the knaves are life like and full of character, the good characters are too much of mere abstractions. The females, too, are very faintly drawn. They are all alike, and they give very little idea of the influence which the wife within the zenana walls exercises in Indian daily life. But still the characters and pictures, such as they are, give the book a real value. We have not space for long quotations, but the following passage will give some notion of the author's vigorous and natural, if sometimes rather rough and homely, style.

'Baburam Babu is sitting as a Babu should. A servant is rubbing his legs. On one side are seated some pundits jabbering about shastras, maintaining that pumpkins are prohibited on one particular day and brinjals on another, that to take salt with milk is in effect to eat beef, and otherwise raising a clatter like the *dhenki*. In another direction is a party of chess players one of them leans his head on his hand and is lost in thought, ruin impends over him, for he is about to be checkmated. On another side some musicians are tuning their instruments. The *tanpura* is giving forth its purring sound. Elsewhere accountants are writing up their books. In front stand debtor ryots and creditor shopkeepers whose debts and claims are being enquired into, and admitted or denied. The *baitakkhana* is swarming with people, the mahajuns are crying out that they gave their goods on credit, some two, some four years ago, and that they are sore put to it for want of payment, that they have come time after time for their money without getting it, that their business is all but stopped.

Petty traders like the oil-man, fuel-supplier and grocer, etc. pleading their cause pathetically and humbly. "We are ruined, sir," they say, "we are weak like the *pooti* fish; how can we subsist if you treat us so? The muscles of our legs are worn out with coming to your house for the money. Our shops are closed. Our wives and children are starving." The dewanji replies, "Go to-day; of course you will get your money; why do you make such a fuss about it?" If any one speaks boldly after this, Babutam Babu waxes wrathful, abuses the man and turns him out.

Besides *Áláler Gharer Dulál*, Tekchand Thakur has written several minor works. *Rámá Ranjiká* chiefly consists of a series of dialogues between a husband and his wife on various social and moral topics. It is intended for the use of ladies learning to read and write late in life. *Mad kháná bara dáy—ját thákár ki upáy* is devoted, like many other recent Bengali books, to an exposition of the evils of drunkenness. *Jat Kinchit* is a not very interesting exposition of the Brahmin religion. *Abhedi*—Tekchand Thakur's latest work—treats of the same subject, and has brought down upon him the wrath of the redoubtable Babu Keshub Chunder Sen and his followers.

From Tekchand to 'Hutam' is an easy transition. For Kali Prosunno Singh, or 'Hutam,' was one of the most successful writers in the style first introduced by Tekchand. In early youth he made several translations from the Sanskrit, and in particular he is the author of a translation of the *Mahábhárata*, which may be regarded as the greatest literary work of his age. But it is not as a translator that he is known to fame, and familiar to almost every Bengali, but as the author of *Hutam Pyancha*, a collection of sketches of city-life, something, after the manner of Dickens' *Sketches by Boz*, in which the follies and peculiarities of all classes, and not seldom of men actually living, are described in racy vigorous language, not seldom disfigured by obscenity. Among them are the *Charak Puja*, the *Bárah Yári*, *Popular Excitements*, *Charlatanry*, *Babu Pudma Lochan Datta* or the *Sudden Incarnation*, and *Snán Jattra*. The following short extract will give some notion of his style. The scene is laid in the native quarter of Calcutta after nightfall.

'The noise of the bell and the brass-worker has ceased to proclaim that it is still early. The lamps in every street are lighted. Bel flowers and ice-cream and curds are offered for sale by loud-voiced hawkers. The front doors of wine-shops are closed as the law directs, but men who wish to buy are not sent away empty. Gradually the darkness thickens. At this time, thanks to English shoes, striped Santipur scarfs and Simla dhutis, you can't tell high

from low Groups of fast young men, with peals of laughter and plenty of English talk, are knocking at this door and that They left home when they saw the lamps lighted in the evening, and will return when the flour mills begin to work They haunt in crowds the poultry market in Machua Bazar and the crossing in Chor Bagan Street Some cover their faces with scarfs, and think that no one recognizes them Others shout, cough, sneeze, and otherwise display their exuberant spirits The office clerk has washed his hands and face and taken his brief evening meal, and is now busy with his guitar In the next room little boys are bawling out their lessons from Vidyasagar's spelling book Goldsmiths have lighted their small earthen lamps, and are preparing to set about their business The cloth merchants, braziers, and furniture dealers have shut their shops for the night, and the money changer is counting his cash and estimating his gains Fishwomen in the decaying Sobha Bazar market are selling—lamps in hand—their stores of putrid fish and salted *hilsa*, and coaxing purchasers by calling out, "You fellow with the napkin on your shoulder, will you buy some fine fish ?" "You fellow with a moustache like a broom, will you pay four annas ?" Some one, anxious to display his gallantry, is rewarded by hearing something unpleasant of his ancestors Smokers of madat and ganjah, and drunkards who have drunk their last pice, are bawling out, "Generous men, pity a poor blind Brahman," and so procure the wherewithal for a new debauch \* \* \* \* It is the evening of the *Nila*, and a Saturday, and the city is unusually crowded Hanging lanterns and wall lamps shed their light in the betel shops The air is full of the scent of the flowers hawked about the streets In some houses over the street, lessons are being given in dancing, and passers by stand open mouthed below enjoying the tinkling music On one side a fight is going on A constable has caught a thief and is dragging him away with his hands tied, other thieves are laughing and enjoying the fun and blessing their stars for their own good luck, quite forgetting that their turn will come some other day'

In the morning the scene is changed —

"Ding dong, ding dong, sounds the clock in the Church It is four in the morning, and night wandering Babus have turned their faces homewards Oorya Brahmans are at work on the flour mills Street lamps are growing faint Light breezes are blowing Quails are singing in the verandas of the night houses But for this, or when the crows begin to caw, or a street dog occasionally barks for want of something else to do, the city is still silent By and by you see groups of women going to the riverside to bathe and discussing among themselves the fact that Ram's mother cannot walk, that the fourth daughter in law in another house is a shrew, and that another woman is hideous Butchers from Chitpore are coming in with loads of mutton Police sergeants darogahs and jemadars, and other specimens of the 'terror of the poor,' who have finished

their rounds, are walking back to their stations with sounding steps, their girdles and pockets filled with rupees, small silver and pice. They are not too proud to accept a bit of fuel, a chillum of tobacco, or a roll of pan. Some are coming back angry with the city because it has disappointed their hopes, and are busy revolving in their minds the best means of making some rich man feel their dignity and power.

'Loud booms the morning gun. The crows are cawing noisily, and leaving their nightly shelter. Shopkeepers open their shutters, how before Gandheswari, sprinkle Ganges water on the floor, change the water in their hookas and begin to smoke. Gradually day dawns. Fishermen are hurrying along with baskets of fish. Fisherwomen are quarrelling and running after them. Baskets of potatoes and brinjals from Baidyabati are coming in. The messengers of death, foreign and native, are starting in their round of visits in gari or palki, according to their condition, without a smile in their faces unless fever or cholera is rife. \* \* \* \* \*

'Pundits from the *toles* and pujaris are going to bathe in the river with a change of clothes in bundles under their arms. They are in a hurry to-day because they must be with their jajmans early. Rheumatic middle-aged gentlemen are out in their morning walks. Oorya bearers, with tooth-stick in hand, are off like the rest to the waterside. The *Englishman*, the *Hurkaru* and the *Phoenix*, are being distributed to their subscribers. Native papers are like venison; they are kept for a day to get a flavour. It is different with English papers; they must be distributed before the sun is up.'

So much for Hutam.

One of the best masters of a pure and vigorous Bengali style—neither characterized by the somewhat pedantic purity of Vidyasagar, nor rough and homely like Tekchand and Hutam—one of the best masters, we say, of Bengali style is Babu Bhudeb Mukerji. He has, unfortunately, written little, except works of a technical character, but his little volume of historical tales, from which we have not space to quote, is enough to show that he might have done a great deal more than he actually has done.

The next author to be considered is Mr. Michael Madhusudan Datta, a most prolific writer of poems and plays. There is probably no writer whose merits are more variously estimated—some enthusiasts thinking him fit to compare with Kalidasa, while others regard him as a mere poetaster. For ourselves we agree with neither, and while admitting his considerable merits, we are not prepared to rank him among great poets. He has incurred much hostile criticism by his innovations in language, and by his

introduction into Bengali of the use of blank verse, but his rightful place in Bengali literature is perhaps the highest.

His poetical works are the *Meghnada Badh*, the *Tilottama Sambhava*, the *Birangana* and the *Brajangana*. The two former are what in Europe would be called epic poems, and in India *mahakavyas*. Both are written in blank verse—the first instances of the kind in Bengali. Of the two, the *Tilottama* was the earliest, but the *Meghnada Badh* is Mr Datta's greatest work. The subject is taken from the *Ramayana*, the source of inspiration to so many Indian poets. In the war with Ravana, Meghnada, the most heroic of Ravana's sons and warriors, is slain by Lakshman, Rama's brother. This is the subject, and Mr Datta owes a great deal more to Valmiki than the mere story. But, nevertheless, the poem is his own work from beginning to end. The scenes, characters, machinery and episodes, are in many respects of Mr Datta's own creation. In their conception and development, Mr Datta has displayed a high order of art, and to do justice to it, or even to give a suitable idea of it, would require a much more minute examination of the poem than the space at our command will allow. To Homer and Milton, as well as to Valmiki, he is largely indebted in many ways, but he has assimilated and made his own most of the ideas which he has taken, and this poem is on the whole the most valuable work in modern Bengali literature. The characters are clearly conceived and capable of winning the reader's sympathy. The machinery, including a great deal that is supernatural, is skilfully and easily handled. The imagery is graceful and tender and terrible in turn. The play of fancy gives constant variety. The diction is richly poetic, and the words so happily chosen as constantly to bring up by association ideas congruous to those which they directly express. Nor is the verse broken up into couplets complete in themselves, in the Sanskrit fashion, but, abounding like Milton's in variety of pause, it seems to us musical and graceful, as well as a fitting vehicle for passionate feelings.

Mr Datta, however, is not faultless. He wants repose. The winds rage their loudest when there is no necessity for the lightest puff. Clouds gather and pour down a deluge, when they need do nothing of the kind, and the sea grows terrible in its wrath, when everybody feels inclined to resent its interference. All this bombast is unworthy of Mr Datta's genius and cultivated taste. Equally so is his constant repetition of the same images and phrases till they almost nauseate his readers. Nor is he

altogether innocent of plagiarism. Homer and Valmiki are not unfrequently put under contribution, and Milton and Kalidasa have equal reason to complain.

Then again grammar might have been respected; and we must strongly protest against the constant introduction in imitation of the English idiom of such verbs as *stutila*, *swanila*, *nirghosila*.

We have given no extracts from the *Meghnada Badh*, because we could give no adequate idea of its merits by isolated quotations. The poem is beautiful as a whole, but single passages would give no more idea of it than a brick could give of the building from which it was taken.

Of Mr. Datta's other works, the *Tilottama Sambhava* was the earliest. It is an epic like the *Meghnada Badh*, but far inferior to that poem. The subject is the birth of Tilottama, the fairest of Brahma's creation, created for the express purpose of causing discord between the powerful Titan brothers, Sunda and Upasunda, who had expelled the Aryan gods from heaven.

We gladly turn from the *Tilottama* to a less ambitious but more mature work, the *Birangana*. It is a series of poetical epistles from heroes, wives to their husbands. It followed the *Meghnada Badh*, and there is the same gorgeous imagery, the same rich poetic diction, and the same musical variously modulated versification.

The *Brajangana* is a short and fragmentary poem in rhyme. It sings the woes of Radha during the days of her bereavement—a subject so often treated before, that novelty might seem to be impossible. Mr. Datta, however, has contrived to say much that is both new and beautiful, and he is just as successful in rhyme as in blank verse. In fact, his rhyme is the best in the language. Of his sonnets we are no great admirers, though they might serve to win a name for a less distinguished author. They were composed in Europe. One of them is dated from Versailles, and others are addressed to Dante, Professor Goldstücker, Tennyson, Victor Hugo and Italy,—a sufficiently miscellaneous list of subjects, it must be confessed.

As a dramatist, Mr. Datta is not generally successful. Among his plays are *Sarmmistha*, *Padmavati*, and *Krishna Kumari*; and the first mentioned in particular is very generally admired. In our judgment none of them are of much value. No Bengali writer has yet shown any real dramatic power. Even Babu Dinabandhu Mitra, the best writer in this line, en-

tirely fails when he attempts to portray any of the higher emotions, and as for Mr. Datta, his undoubted poetic genius seems entirely to desert him as soon as he sets about writing a play. His farces, however, are good. One of them, entitled *Is this Civilization?* is the best in the language. This little work deserves notice independently of its own really great merit.

The Bengali press at the present day is very prolific, but by far the largest part of the books published are mere servile imitations of some successful author. There are imitators of Vidyasagar, imitators of Tekchand Thakur, of Hutam, of Babu Dinabandhu Mitra and of the author of *Durgeshnandini*; but perhaps, no work has formed the model for so many imitators as *Is this Civilization?* It is a farce with a purpose, being intended chiefly to ridicule and so expose the vice of drunkenness and the other evils by which it is generally attended. The Burtolla Presses and shops actually overflow with little books, containing a dozen or twenty pages each, and selling for an anna or two, all directed against the vice of drunkenness. There are farces, too, of larger bulk, one of which, called *Bujhile-ki-na*, or *Do you understand?* is very popular, and often produced at private theatricals; and these, too, like the others, are mere copies of *Is this Civilization?* This little work, therefore, independently of its being in itself one of the two best farces in the language, gains additional importance from the large number of other books written after its model.

To give any adequate idea of this clever little work by translated extracts would be entirely impossible, because half the fun lies in the absurd jargon interlarded with English words and the cant of debating clubs in which the characters speak. The scene is laid in the "Gyan Tarangini Sabha"—a sort of scientific debating society which chiefly devotes itself to nautch-girls and tippling. The types of life and character which it represents are sufficiently disgusting, and the important question is, whether the representation is correct.

To the shame of Bengal we must say that we fear the picture is a true one. The reformer who never gets beyond tipsy harangues full of English expressions, should not be confounded as he often is by Europeans with the really cultivated class. But it cannot be denied that he is a fair representative of that great horde of partly educated Babus, whose only claim to enlightenment lies in the fact that they drink, wear shabby trousers and stammer out barbarous English. These are the men who swarm in every

office, and plague officials with endless applications for employment, crowd the thoroughfares of the native town in the evening, drain the liquor shops, and form the majority of his audience when Babu Keshub Chunder Sen lectures at the Town Hall. Of education, they have had nothing worth the name. Having spent a few years very unprofitably in learning a smattering of English at some Anglo-vernacular school, they started in life—if poor, at the age of eighteen, as *umediwars*. If rich, they devoted themselves from the same age with their whole strength to swinish pleasures. The country is overrun with men of this sort, and Mr. Datta's picture is true to the life; but they must not be confounded with the really cultivated class, who, in spite of all that has been said regarding the spread of English education, are comparatively few in number.

The next author whom we must mention is Babu Dinabandhu Mitra, the best Bengali dramatist, indeed the only good dramatic author. He has written altogether five plays, of which two are farces. His earliest production, the *Nil Darpan*, is better known by name to the European public than almost any other Bengali book. Its connection with the indigo riots gave it a notoriety which it certainly would not otherwise have attained. When public feeling was excited on the subject, just after that conviction of Mr. Long, which fitly preceded the extinction of a Court which had thus proved itself unable to rise above the waves of passion and prejudice; at that time *Nil Darpan* was usually spoken of as a filthy and scurrilous production, entirely devoid of literary merit. In this judgment we do not altogether coincide; but at the same time we should give it a very low place as a work of art. The importance was political, not literary; and as literature rather than politics is our present theme, we shall not discuss it at greater length.

Of Babu Dinabandhu Mitra's other plays, *Lilabati* is the most popular; but for our own part, though willingly conceding much that may be said in its favour, we give the preference to another play, *Nabin Tapaswini*. If it has greater faults than the other, they are redeemed by greater merits. The idea of the play is taken from Shakespeare's *Merry Wives of Windsor*, and the plot is that of a well-known Hindu nursery tale, embellished with the love adventures of a sort of Indian Falstaff. The Falstaff of the story is Jaladhir, a prime minister, whose weight and circumference have marked an embarrassing figure, though he still retains the amorous propensities of

youth. The object of his affections is Malati, the young and beautiful wife of a merchant named Kalikanta. Malati has a cousin, Mallika, the purest of women at heart, though endowed with a sharp tongue, the rough edge of which she is not chary of using. Having learnt of Jaladhur's passion for Malati and the solicitations which he addressed to her, she put her cousin up to giving him a series of practical lessons, which form the matter of the play. First of all, Jaladhur is induced to meet his own wife under the idea that she is Malati, and his protestations of love mixed with abuse of his wife are cut short and himself put to flight by the entrance in the scene of Kalikanta, to whose wrath the spurious Mallika [? Malati] would have fallen a victim, if she had not saved herself by telling out to him who she was. This, however, did not occur till Jaladhur had felt the weight of his jealous wife's broom.

The next scene is in the merchant's house, where he has been led to expect that his wishes will at length be gratified. Before venturing on this, Jaladhur has induced his royal master, whose health was failing, to send Kalikanta to Arabia in search of that sovereign remedy—the flesh of the Hondol kutkutia, a fabulous animal which had no existence out of the minister's brain. By Mallika's advice, the trader, instead of starting for Arabia, conceals himself near home, and returns by agreement to the house where Jaladhur is in company with the two ladies. The gay Lothario, thus surprised, hides himself, first, for want of better shelter, with a grotesque mask to hide his head, in a cask of tar, and afterwards in a heap of cotton-wool, with results which may be imagined. At last he is advised to fly, and Mallika lets him out of a back door, immediately in front of which is a great iron cage prepared for the Arabian beast. He runs into this cage in the dark, and Mallika shuts the door. In the morning he is carried off to Court, and the people on the way crowd round the strange beast, pelt him with brick-bats and poke him with sticks, while he is so much afraid of being recognized that he squeaks and capers about, as the wild beast for which he is taken might be supposed to do. At last they meet the king, and after a time Kalikanta turns up, and the facts are in due course disclosed.

This is the comic vein of the piece, but there is also a serious plot, and the two hang together somewhat loosely. The serious plot relates to the King and his Queen, whom he had put away years before, when she was

great with child, and whom many supposed to have been murdered and all believed to be dead. He is now strongly urged to a second marriage in the interests of his kingdom, but his heart yearns for his lost Queen, whom he at length discovers in a beggar woman, with their son, now a fine young man, disguised as a hermit. The hermit loves the fair one destined for the king's second wife, and ends by marrying her.

This serious plot is poor enough, but the other story is worked out in an irresistibly comic manner. The character of Jaladhur, too, though doubtless taken in great part from Shakespeare's Falstaff is life-like and consistent, and Mallika, with her love of mischief and fun and inexhaustible fertility of resource, is Babu Dinabandhu Mitra's best female character. Jaladhur's ugly and jealous wife, too, is excellently drawn, and tickles the reader's fancy with her firm persuasion that her corpulent old husband is sighed after and inveigled by all the young women about the place.

*Lilabati* is a more ambitious work. Its plot is romantic and complicated, and in working it out, the melodramatic element is largely introduced. We have not space to discuss it at length, and must, therefore, content ourselves with expressing the opinion that, as in *Nabin Tapaswini* Babu Dinabandhu Mitra has proved himself the greatest humourist, so in *Lilabati* he appears as the wittiest writer in the Bengali language. Neither Tekchand nor Hutam come near him in this respect. *Lilabati* is now its author's most widely-read work, since *Nil Darpan* has lost its factitious popularity, but in our opinion it is rather in broad comedy and farce that its author excels than in so serious a drama.

It remains to notice Babu Dinabandhu Mitra's two farces. In the "*Old Man Mad for Marriage*," a not unfrequent kind of folly is cleverly satirized. An old man, named Rajib Mukerji, is very anxious to be married, and people are wont to irritate him by proposing as a match an ugly black-faced Dom woman, known as "Panchua's mother." Some school-boys determine to play him a trick. A sham Ghatak, or match-maker, is sent to him. The preliminary arrangements are completed, and Rajib is to be married. One of the most mischievous among the boys is dressed up as a girl to personate the bride, and some of the neighbours represent her male and female friends. The mock ceremony is gone through, and Rajib passes the night in jollification with the boys. His horrors may be imagined on awaking in the morning and finding that the bride by his side is "Panchua's

mother," who offers a young sucking pig to his caresses as their adopted child

The other farce, *Sadhabar Ekadasi*, is more cleverly written, but unfortunately it is so disfigured by obscenity that we can neither quote nor analyse it. A great deal of its author's charm, too, lies in his wit, and this is utterly impossible for us to reproduce in English, depending as it does on similarities between the sounds of Bengali words and ideas which are almost incomprehensible to a foreigner.

There are several other writers still remaining to be noticed, but the limited space at our disposal compels us to bring the present paper to a close. Babu Ranga Lal Banerji is a poet with a high reputation among his countrymen, but we must say that he has done very little to deserve it. His three poems are—*Padmini*, *Karmmadebi* and *Surasundari*, all three being versified stories of Rajput women, taken from Tod's *Rajasthan*. *Padmini* is perhaps the best. This writer belongs to the school of Bharat Chandra, though, unlike the old author, he is free from obscenity. Indeed, such merits as he has are chiefly of a negative character.

Babu Hem Chunder Banerji, though less known to fame, is a far better poet. His *Indra's Nectar Feast* is a spirited imitation of Dryden's *Alexander's Feast*.

Among the romance writers, Babu Protap Chandra Ghose, author of '*Bangadhip Parajay*', has recently been noticed at length in this review. The only other writer of this class whose works it seems necessary to notice, is Babu Bankim Chandra Chatarji, whose *Durgesnandini*, *Kapal Kundala* and *Mrinalini* are among the most popular of Bengali books. Perhaps we cannot do better than give a brief sketch of the story of *Kapal Kundala* which, if not the best, is the shortest and most easily reproduced of the three. The story then runs thus—

A young Brahman named Naba Kumar, on his return from Ganga Sagar, was left by his companions on a deserted part of the coast of Hidge lee. The only inhabitant of the place was a 'Kapalika,' or member of one of those strange sects which practised the wild and terrible Tantric forms of worship—whose temple is the burning ghat, and for whom no rite is too bloody and disgusting. From him the young man obtained food and shelter. Having provided for his necessities, his unattractive host, with his drinking cup of human skull, went on a journey with a promise to return again.

But day after day passed and no Kapalika appeared, till at length Naba Kumar, weary of waiting, determined to find his own way, if possible, through the pathless wilderness of jungle in which the hermit's cave stood, to some region inhabited by men. But in the attempt he utterly lost his way, and the following scene then occurs, which we quote because it is a favourite with native readers :—

' He now perceived that he could not even find his way back. The deep roar of the water boomed in his ear and he recognized the voice of the ocean. Suddenly emerging from the thicket, he saw the sea spread before him. The infinite expanse of the dark waters filled him with a sublime joy. He sat down on the sandy beach. The dark foamy endless waters ! Far as the eye could reach on either side, long white lines of foam flashed on the crest of the waves as they broke on the flat line of the beach, and shone against the golden sand like a garland of snow-white flowers. But over the expanse of ocean, too, a thousand waves were dancing and breaking into foam. If the wind could reach the stars and set them in motion across the background of the sky, this alone could fitly image the sight of the white foam-spots on the dark waters of the sea. The sun was about to set, and where the line of soft light fell, the water was transformed to molten gold. And in the distance some European ships could be descried, skimming the ocean like gigantic birds with great white spreading wings.

How long Naba Kumar continued to gaze at the ocean, he could not tell. Suddenly the darkness of night came down on the bosom of the deep, and he then remembered that his way back must be found.

\* \* \* \*

Turning his back to the sea, he saw a magnificent vision. There stood on the sandy beach of the deep-sounding sea, dimly seen in the twilight, the figure of a woman such as he had never seen before. Her cloud-like tresses confined by no hand, flowed down below her knee in long serpentine curls. \* \* Her face was partly hidden, but it shone like the moon through a break in the clouds. There was a mild and subdued light in her large eyes. Her expression was grave : but her face beamed on him like the moon now newly risen over the surface of the deep.'

The young woman thus described in language rather more lofty than distinct, turns out to be a Kapal Kundala, a girl who had been saved from the wreck of one of those Portuguese pirate ships, which in old times ravaged

the whole coast of Bengal in search of slaves, and who had been brought up by the Kapalika hermit in his solitary dwelling for ultimate purposes of which she knew nothing. She had imbibed from him a deep veneration for his goddess Kali, but her soul revolted from the human sacrifices which the Kapalika offered to Kali whenever occasion offered. The two returned to the hermit's cell, and it soon appeared that Naba Kumar was intended for sacrifice. His host, who was a man of vast strength, had tied him to the stake and would have at once carried out his purpose, but Kapal Kundala concealed the sacrificial knife, and when the Kapalika went to look for it, she cut the prisoner's bonds and the two took at once to flight. After a time they reached a solitary shrine, and induced the pujari to marry them, Naba Kumar, it is needless to say, being deeply enamoured of his companion, and she having no objection to marriage because she had no idea what it meant. The pujari showed them, too, the way to Midnapore, from whence Naba Kumar's residence at Saptagram was easily reached.

This was not Naba Kumar's first marriage. He had been married once before, but while his wife was a mere child; and she having been converted with her father to the Muhammadan faith, they had left the country together, so that husband and wife had never met after the day of their marriage. A strange adventure now befell on the way back to Saptagram. Naba Kumar, having done some trifling service to a Musalman lady of great wealth and apparently high rank, she asked his name and residence, and learned that he was her husband. For the lady was his wife, now Lutf-un-nissa, the favourite courtesan whose lisp and beauty had won her power and wealth among the courtiers at Agra, where her father had risen to eminence through the favour of Akbar. As a mark of gratitude for the service rendered to her, she presented Kapal Kundala with a magnificent set of jewels, which the ignorant girl gave away in complete ignorance of their use and value to the first beggar on the road. Lutf-un-nissa was on her way back from Orissa, whither she had gone in furtherance of an intrigue to divert the succession from Prince Selim. A strange Nemesis had now overtaken her. She who boasted that she carried a heart of stone which neither prince nor courtiers could touch—she was now conquered by the poor wandering but handsome Brahman who had once been her husband. Arrived in Agra, she found Selim seated on the throne, and obtained his permission to return to Bengal. She came to Saptagram, took a house, and spread her net for the affection

of Naba Kumar. Finding, however, an insurmountable obstacle in his constant love for Kapal Kundala, she determined on a bold scheme for undermining it.

Kapal Kundala had now been more than a year in Naba Kumar's house. Her name, owing to its Tantric import, was changed to Mrinmayi. She herself had been to a certain extent reclaimed from the character of a child of the wilderness, but she regretted the change. Naba Kumar loved her ardently, but she did not return his feeling. Her heart was pre-occupied by the great goddess Kali, to whose service she was fanatically devoted. She would have died for Naba Kumar, if necessary, but she did not love him, and she could not bear the restraints of the zenana. Setting his authority at nought, she one night stole out into the jungle to gather herbs for a female friend, who wanted them for a philter. Approaching an old ruin, she overheard some conversation which seemed to concern herself. She was detected listening by one of the talkers who appeared to be a Brahman youth. She was seized with fear and fled. She saw she was being followed, and before she reached home and closed the door behind her, she recognized the well-known stalwart form of the Kapalika.

The Kapalika, when his victims had escaped, had given chase, but had fallen and broken his arm. While he lay helpless in bed, Bhawani had appeared to him in a dream and demanded Kapal Kundala as a sacrifice. When the use of his limbs had been recovered, he spent nights and days in searching for her, and at length he had succeeded. But he needed assistance in bringing her to the sacrificial altar, and while watching his opportunity, he met Lutf-un-nissa disguised for purposes of her own as a Brahman youth, and it was these two whom Kapal Kundala had disturbed in their consultations. The two did not agree. Lutf-un-nissa's object was to separate Kapal Kundala from her husband, but she would not consent to violence of any kind. Finding the Kapalika resolved in his purpose, Lutf-un-nissa determined to save Kapal Kundala by telling her the facts, and then to work on her feelings of gratitude. Accordingly, next day, Kapal Kundala found on her path a note from the disguised Brahman inviting a second meeting in the wood, and promising important disclosures. No other Hindu wife would have kept the appointment, but she did, and not unnoticed.

Kapal Kundala, when going out the night before, had been seen by

Naba Kumar, who, though not yet jealous, might readily have been made so. He watched the second night, and found her going out again; and to add to his torments, Lutf-un-nissa's note had dropped unperceived on the floor. He picked it up and read it, and determined to follow. But almost before he had got outside the house, the Kapalika stood before him. Disappointed in Lutf-un-nissa, the terrible devotee now sought to secure the assistance of Naba Kumar himself by working on his jealousy. He told Naba Kumar of his own fall and loss of strength, and of Bhawani's command, and called on him to assist in the sacrifice of his wife, whom at the same time he denounced as a fallen traitress. If he wanted proof, he bade him follow; and the two plunged together into the thicket.

Kapal Kundala had met Lutf-un-nissa in the wood, and the latter, after telling her the Kapalika's story and letting her fully understand his terrible purpose, disclosed also her own identity and history, and the object she had in view. She promised Kapal Kundala riches and comfort in some foreign land, if only she would leave her husband without warning. To this she might have consented, having no real love for her husband, but when once she had heard the will of Bhawani, nothing remained for her but to fulfil it. She left the place, and at a little distance fell in with the Kapalika and Naba Kumar. For they had been watched throughout. Naba Kumar was fearfully excited by drink administered to him by the Kapalika, and was ready to carry out the hermit's purpose. They all went together to the place of sacrifice—the burning ghat, which is minutely described in all its horrid details, with its crowd of vultures, half-burnt human bodies, and heaps of skulls and bones in all directions. Then they prepared to worship according to the rites of the Tantrikas. Naba Kumar took Kapal Kundala to the waterside to bathe her before she should be sacrificed. There an explanation was given. He begged her to come again. She declared her intention of fulfilling Bhawani's will, and while the debate between them was going on, just as he stretched out his hand to seize her and force her to return, the bank beneath her feet gave way, and she fell into the deep stream below. He leaped after her. Both for a time disappeared. The Kapalika [at] length dragged Naba Kumar to land, but Kapal Kundala was seen or heard of no more. And so the story ends, much to the disappointment of most Bengali readers, who much prefer the orthodox ending, where all live happily ever after.

*Mrinalini* is a book of a very different stamp, and many consider it Babu Bankim Chandra Chatarji's most successful production.

But here must end our brief and imperfect sketch of Bengali literature—a literature which, with much that is feeble and base and utterly worthless, yet has within it what may encourage no small degree of hope for the future. Its character is for the most part imitative, but what literature, save that of Greece, has ever been independent and original in its youth? Once and again has a voice from that holy land of beauty and truth awakened the torpid heart and mind of Western Europe. Horace himself, the most spontaneous and genuine of all the Latin poets, entertained no higher idea of originality than to make it consist in the importation of a new form of poetry from Greece. An imitator in those days meant an imitator of Latin authors—the imitation of Greek being almost implied in the excellence of any work. And when Europe woke again from the long sleep which followed on the dissolution of the Roman Empire, it was on the translation and imitation of Greek and Latin authors that its energies were employed. Is there no imitation in Dante himself? It may seem improbable that European ideas will ever really be assimilated by the people of India—that all we can effect here is a superficial varnish of sham intelligence. But everything cannot come in a day, and there was a time when it would have seemed almost equally improbable that the little remnant of intelligence preserved in the Latin Church, and the study of classical antiquity, would have grown into what we now see among the Celtic and Teutonic peoples of the West. The Bengalis may not seem to have the fibre for doing much in the way of real thought any more than of vigorous action; but it was chiefly among the supple and pliant Italians that the revival of learning in Europe began; and it is possible to imagine that the Bengalis—the Italians of Asia, as the *Spectator* has called them—are now doing a great work, by, so to speak, acclimatising European ideas and fitting them for reception hereafter by the hardier and more original races of Northern India.

## **BUDDHISM AND THE SANKHYA PHILOSOPHY**

This article appeared anonymously in *The Calcutta Review* for 1871, No. 106, pp. 191-203. That the writer of it was no other than Bankim Chandra is known from the prospectus of the *Selections from The Calcutta Review*, which has been referred to in the prefatory note to the preceding article published in this volume. In a letter, which Bankim addressed in 1873 to Sambhu Chandra, the editor of *Mookerjee's Magazine*, mention is also made of this article as having been published in *The Calcutta Review*. He wrote as follows :—

“That promised second part of Hindu Philosophy is a Frankenstein which would kill me. . . . Besides I have exhausted what I had to say about the *Sankhya* in an article in the *Calcutta Review* and a series of articles in the *Banga Darshan*—and the *Sankhya* is the only system of which I have made anything like a study.”

- 1 *A Lecture on Hindu Philosophy* By Babu Rajkrishna Mukarjya, M A  
 Calcutta 1870  
 2 *Sankhya Aphorisms of Kapila* By J R Ballantyne, LL D Cal  
 cutta 1865  
 3 *Chips from a German Workshop* By Max Muller, M A Vol I  
 London 1867  
 4 *Le Bouddha et sa Religion* Par J Barthelemy St Hilaire, Membre de  
 l'Institut. Paris 1860

M. Barthelemy St Hilaire, and other writers on Buddhism, have endeavoured to show that the metaphysical doctrines of Buddha were borrowed from the earlier systems of Brahmanical philosophy, and in particular from the Sankhya. This opinion has been rejected by no less an authority than Professor Max Muller, who, while admitting that any relation that can be established between the Sankhya and the Buddhist philosophy would be invaluable in determining the real chronology of the philosophical literature of India, doubts that any such relation exists \*. Its existence is indeed of such importance to the student of Indian history, and it has been called in question by so high an authority, that we make no apology for entering into an enquiry as to the reality and nature of this relation between the two systems.

Before we proceed to discuss any community of doctrines between a system of philosophy and a system of theology, it may be well to remind the general reader of the constant association which obtains in India between theological beliefs and philosophical speculations. Professor Max Muller himself, than whom no one can be more competent to pronounce on the question, doubts whether the founder of the Buddhist religion cared much about philosophical speculations †. But in India the relation between theology and philosophy has always been peculiar. In other countries, popular systems of religious belief have rarely borrowed their theological tenets from the abstruse teachings of philosophers, but in India religious dogmas have produced systems of philosophy, and systems of philosophy

\* *Chips from a German Workshop*, Vol I, p 220

† *Ibid*, Vol I, p 234

have in their turn given birth to religious dogmas. There was scarcely a single system of religious doctrine in India, which had not its cognate system of speculative philosophy attached to it; nor many systems of philosophy which did not form the source of the religious doctrines of particular sects. The special mission of the Mímánsá philosophy was to explain the Vedas; the special object of the Vedánta to elaborate the Pantheistic conception of the Deity to be found in them. The eclecticism of the Bhagavadgítá modifies largely, even to this day, the religious convictions of the more educated classes of orthodox Hindus. The teaching of Chaitanya was the ultimate product of an union between the Vaishnavism of Rámánuja and Sándilya's doctrine of faith. Who shall say that Tantrikism itself is not the result of an alliance between the Pauranic religion on the one hand, and of the Mysticism of the Yoga philosophy and the sensualism of Chárváka on the other?

The Sánkhya, like most other systems of Indian philosophy, has its own theology and its own cosmogony. And the Sánkhya philosophy illustrates in a special manner the disastrous consequences of this mutual affiliation between religion and philosophy. Those consequences must in every case be, that philosophy moving within the narrow circles of orthodoxy, would develop into systems of error; and the errors of national and sectarian creeds, which would otherwise die out of their own rottenness, would receive strength and life from the subtle and illusory arguments of philosophy. This mischievous tendency of an alliance between religion and philosophy, was never so conspicuous as in the case of the Sánkhya. The Sánkhya is remarkably sceptical in its tendency; many antiquated or contemporaneous errors were swept away by its merciless logic. Carried to its legitimate consequences, a wise scepticism might have contributed to the lasting benefit of Hindu progress. And yet the Sánkhya is as great a mass of errors as any other branch of Hindu philosophy—even inferior, perhaps, to the Nyáya and Vaisesika in intrinsic worth. This was the result of its uniform display of a tendency to support the authority of the Vedas. God himself could be denied, but not the authority of the Vedas. There is every reason to believe that this veneration for the Vedas was by no means a very sincere feeling with the sceptical philosopher; but whether that feeling was sincere or hollow, the authority of the Vedas appears to have set the limits beyond which thought was not allowed to range. Only in one instance,

about to be mentioned, were even the Vedas set at nought; but Kapila could go no further.

That is what Sákyasinha did. He took the step from which Kapila had recoiled. He denied the authority of the Vedas; and with it, caste, sacrifice, superstition, priesthood—whatever in fact had flourished so gaily under the shadow of its greatness. His success was great.

The doctrines which have in particular been supposed to be common to the Sánkhya and to Buddhism are, the rejection of all belief in the existence of God, and emancipation by the cessation of pain—the *mukti* of the Sánkhya and the *Nirvána* of the Buddhists. There is no question about the atheism of the Buddhists. Professor Max Müller himself has contributed to settle that point. But the atheism of the Sánkhya is still an open question. We make no apology, therefore, for dwelling at some length on the Sánkhya doctrines about the existence of God.

It is probably generally known that the name Sánkhya is given to two cognate systems of philosophy, to the Yoga system of Patanjali as well as to the system attributed to Kapila. The latter is the Sánkhya properly so called, and it is of the latter alone that we speak. Kapila's system is generally known as *Niriswara*, or "atheistic," and is thus distinguished from the *Seswara* Sánkhya of Patanjali. But the atheism of Kapila's Sánkhya has been doubted not by Professor Max Müller alone, but by other scholars of eminence, Hindu as well as European. Among the former may be mentioned Udayana Áchárya, the author of *Kusumánjali*, who describes the Sánkhya philosophers as worshippers of the *Adi vidván*, (First Wise).\* Among the latter may be mentioned (in addition to Professor Max Müller) Dr. F. E. Hall, who, like him, takes up the cause of Sánkhya Theism against Colebrooke and M. Barthélemy St. Hilaire.†

A third class of critics, is represented by Vijnána Bhikshu; who, himself an eminent Sánkhya philosopher, and the commentator on the *Sánkhya Pravachana*, holds that Kapila by merely denying that the existence of God can be proved, never intended actually to deny that existence itself.‡ Isvara

\* *Kusumanjali*, I, 3.

† Preface to *Sánkhya Sára*, note, pp. 1, 2.

‡ See his Commentary on Aphorism 92, Book I. Ballantyne's Translation, p. 36.

Krishna, one of the most eminent names in Sánkhya philosophy, is wholly silent on the subject of the existence of God.

There are grounds for this diversity of opinion; and in order to show what the Sánkhya conception of Iswara really was, we proceed to analyse the opinions of the *Sánkhya Pravachana* on the subject. The *Sánkhya Pravachana* alone, and not any later work, can throw any light on the original conception, which appears to have been gradually overshadowed by the Pauranic element in the belief of Kapila's followers.\*

The Aphorisms broadly assert that the existence of God cannot be proved.† Thereupon Max Müller remarks, "Kapila is accused of denying the existence of Iswara, which in general means the 'Lord', but which in the passage where it occurs, refers to the Iswara of the Yogins, or mystic philosophers. They maintained that in an ecstatic state man possesses the power of seeing God face to face, and they wished to have this ecstatic intuition included under the head of sensuous perceptions. To this Kapila demurred, 'you have not proved the existence of your Lord, and therefore I see no reason why I should alter my definition of sensuous perceptions in order to accommodate your ecstatic visions.' "‡

Now it is not correct to say that Kapila's celebrated Aphorism refers to the Iswara of the Yogins, as distinguished from the God of other sects or systems. The two preceding Aphorisms do indeed refer to the *perceptions* of the Yogins, as distinguished from ordinary perception, but there is no reference whatever anywhere to the Yoga conception of Iswara as distinguished from ordinary conceptions of him. Kapila defines perception to be "the knowledge which portrays the form of that which is in conjunction" or as Dr. Ballantyne rather incorrectly translates it, "that discernment which being in conjunction, portrays the form."§ Now, it was evident that the

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\* Dr. Hall surmises that the *Sánkhya Pravachana* (the Aphorisms of Kapila) is a modern production, and is indebted to the *Kárikás* of Iswara Krishna (Preface to *Sánkhya Sára*, pp. 8 to 12). Among his reasons, one is that there is a great similarity between the *Kárikás* and the Aphorisms. Why is not that a reason for inferring that the *Kárikás* are indebted to the Aphorisms? There is at least tradition on this side, while there is nothing on the other.

† "*Iswarasiddheh*," Book I. 92.

‡ *Chips from a German Workshop*, Vol. I, p. 228.

§ The Aphorism is as follows—"Yat sambaddham sat tadákárollekhi Vijnánát pratyaksham. (89, Book I.)

Yogins might cavil at this definition as imperfect, for it did not embrace their mystic perceptions. Objects not in conjunction with the organs of perception were, it was supposed, perceived by them. Accordingly in the next Aphorism he defends his definition, on the ground that the mystic perception was not an external perception (*abájhyam*), and that therefore his definition could not be expected to apply to it; and in the next succeeding Aphorism he takes another view, and contends that his definition may be so interpreted as even to include the internal perception. It will be seen that Kapila accepts the reality of the Mystics' internal perceptions, and so far was he from implying that "he saw no reason why he should alter his definition to accommodate their ecstatic visions," he was actually at great pains to do so.\* And his definition with the restriction in Aphorism 90, and the interpretation in Aphorism 91, stood in no need of a denial of a Lord if his existence was believed in. Direct perception of him by the Mystic would be an internal cognition (*abájhyam*), and therefore not intended to be included in the definition. Or if you insist on internal perception being included within the definition, you have only to understand "conjunction" in the sense given to it in Aphorism 91, and the Yogins' perception of the Lord would be found included. If Kapila had intended to evade the objection founded on mystical perception, he would have said that he would not alter his definition, not because the existence of the Mystic's Lord was not proved, but because the reality of the Mystic's perception was not proved. Admitting the perception, he gains nothing by denying only one of its objects.

But the fact is, that it is neither to the Yogins' Iswara, nor to the Yogins' perception, that the passage in which the denial of God occurs, (92 Book I) has any reference. It refers to Iswara's own perceptions. As, according to the definition, perception results from conjunction of object with sense, the definition cannot by any stretch of meaning be held to apply to perception by God himself; as, supposing him to exist, his perceptions must be from eternity, and what exists from eternity cannot be the result of any conjunction. This is the objection which Kapila anticipates by denying the existence of God in general, without any reference to the Yogins' Iswara, or to any special conception of the divine nature. We should have

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\* The Aphorisms themselves contain a direct acknowledgment of the supernatural power of the Yogins. The 118th Aphorism of the fifth Book is devoted to its glorification.

certainly hesitated to charge Professor Max Müller with a mistake of this nature, had we not on our side an authority certainly able to hold his own against the Professor on matters relating to Sánkhya philosophy. We mean Vijnána Bhikshu, whose *Bhásya* on the Aphorism doubtless settles the point.\*

Granted, however, that this particular passage has reference to the Iswara of the Yogins—how are the Aphorisms 2-12 in Book V. to be accounted for? In these Kapila, or whoever else was the author of the Aphorisms, proceeds to show that the supposition of a God is philosophically unnecessary; that to postulate a Creator and a Moral Governor of the Universe would be to postulate an absurdity; and that you cannot prove His existence in any way. Then he actually proceeds to prove his non-existence. In these passages there is not the slightest allusion from which it can be inferred that they have any special reference to the Iswara of the Yogins. The arguments used here as well as in 93-95 Bk. I., have no special application to the Yoga conception; and have the same force, if they have any force at all, against every theistic conception known in India. We must make good what we say by reproducing here the arguments themselves.

The existence of God, he says “is not established, because there is no proof of it”—*pramánábhávát na tat siddhi* (10, Bk. V). “It cannot be inferred, because there is no Relation.”—*Sambandhábhávát nánúmánam* (11, Bk. V). According to the Srutis, Nature creates; *Srutirapi Pradhánakáryatwasya* (12, Bk. V).

In this condensed aphoristic form, these arguments will not be intelligible here. Developed into their proper length, they are as follows:—The Sánkhya admits three kinds of evidence or instruments of knowledge, *viz.*, Perception, Inference, and the Testimony of the Vedas. Direct perception of God, of course there is none. Inference fails, as an inference can be made only where an invariable relation has been established; but no invariable relation between a God and anything else from which you can infer His existence has ever been established. Lastly, the Vedas themselves assert that creation proceeds from nature, and do not therefore countenance the supposition of a God.

This, it may be said, is simply denying that the existence of a God can be proved, and does not amount to denying that God exists. This is what

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\* Ballantyne's *Aphorisms of Kapila*, p. 36.

in effect both Max Muller and Vijnana Bhikshu say—Max Müller quotes Vijnana Bhikshu on the point “The Commentator,” he says, “narrates that this strong language was used by Kapila in order to silence the wild talk of the Mystics, and that though he taunted his adversaries with having failed to prove the existence of their Lord, he himself did not deny the existence of a Supreme Being”\* This, however, is not exactly what Vijnana Bhikshu says—the idea of the Aphorism being meant to taunt opponents with having failed to prove the existence of *their* Lord, is Max Muller’s, not Vijnana Bhikshu’s This is what the latter says—“But observe that this demurring to there being any Lord, is merely *in accordance* with the arrogant doctrine of certain *partisans* who held an opinion not recognised by the majority therefore it is to be understood, the expression employed is, because it is not *proved* that there is a Lord, but not the expression that there is *no* Lord”†

This is intelligible in Vijnana Bhikshu, who is a Pauranic, and who has spared no pains to make the Sankhya philosophy serve as a foundation for Pauranic mythology ‡ The very same thing was once said of Comte by one of his followers But we submit that the denial of the fact that there exists proof of any particular essence, amounts in every way, for all philosophical purposes, to a denial of the existence of that essence

For, except in the case of impossible conceptions, as that of a round square, the denial of the existence of the proof is the utmost that can be urged by a philosopher against any conception which is rejected. There is nothing more which can be said against the wildest conceptions ever hatched by the human brain You can say nothing more, if you wish to be logically correct, against the most extravagant conceptions of the Hindu mythology The whole world united cannot advance any *philosophical* argument (we do not speak of theological arguments) against the existence of such a fabulous Being as Indra, or Vishnu, which is not ultimately resolvable into a negation of proof But is that a reason for maintaining that

\* *Chips from a German Workshop* Vol I, p 228 The use of the phrase “Supreme Being,” in discussing the Atheism of the Sankhya, is objectionable and leads to confusion The Sankhya admits a Supreme Being who however, is not God, as we shall show

† See Ballantyne’s *Aphorisms of Kapila* p 36

‡ Vide his Commentary on Aphorism 66 Book VI, Ballantyne’s *Aphorisms of Kapila*, p 173

the whole world has an orthodox belief in the existence of Indra or Vishnu ? Indeed, on this view of the case, there has never been an atheistic system in the world; for no system, not even the Chárvákas whose atheism probably neither Vijnána Bhikshu nor Professor Max Müller would deny, ever went further than to assert that the existence of God cannot be proved.\*

If ever any philosophical system ventured further than this, that system was the Sánkhya. It not only denies that the existence of God can be proved, but asserts that he can *not* exist; that the conception of God as Creator, is an impossible conception. (Aphorisms 93 and 94, Book I). The arguments in these two Aphorisms are thus paraphrased by Professor Max Müller himself. Iswara, "is either absolute and unconditioned (*mukta*), or he is bound and conditioned (*baddha*). If he is absolute and unconditioned, he cannot enter into the condition of Creator; he would have no desires which could instigate him to create. If, on the contrary, he is represented as active, and entering on the work of creation, he would no longer be the absolute and unchangeable Being which we are asked to believe in."† Max Müller holds that Kapila argues thus in regard to the "Supreme Lord of the Mystics." But neither text nor commentaries furnish the slightest reason for supposing that the argument is not directed against the conception of Iswara in general; nor is there anything in the nature of the argument itself to authorise such a restricted interpretation of its applicability. It can certainly be predicated of God as conceived by any believer in the world that he must be either bound or not bound, either conditioned or not conditioned. If so, why should we consider the argument as directed against the conception of a single sect only, when there is nothing in the text to authorise our doing so ? And why should Kapila have used arguments of general applicability, if he wished to demolish the conceptions of a particular sect only ?

Having thus disposed of the supposition of a God as Creator, the Sánkhya philosopher proceeds to disprove the existence of God as a Moral Governor (Aphorisms 2 and 3, Book V). The argument fully developed, runs thus :—You assume a Moral Governor, only because men's actions

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\* We of course do not deny that people may assert that the existence of God cannot be proved on rational grounds, but may yet believe in Him through Revelation. But Kapila, we have seen, denies that even Revelation proves his existence.

† *Chips from a German Workshop*, Vol. I, p. 229.

must be rewarded or punished. You see men rewarded or punished for their actions, and you suppose that there is a God who rewards or punishes. You must admit that he can punish or reward only either according to the merit of the actions, or not according to the merit of the actions. If you suppose Him to reward and punish according to the acts, why can you not presume the *acts* themselves to be the cause of the reward and punishment which you see? There is no purpose which the supposition of a God as cause of rewards and punishments would answer, and which the supposition of acts as such a cause in themselves cannot answer. In supposing a Moral Governor, you therefore make an unnecessary supposition, which is a philosophical error. But if, on the other hand, you suppose that God does *not* punish according to desert, your God is an unjust Being, and therefore a selfish Being. He is a selfish Being, because a Governor who is not just, does not govern for the benefit of the governed; and a Governor, who does not govern for the benefit of the governed, must govern for his own benefit. And more in the same strain.

Having thus not only denied that God exists, but denied that he can exist, it remained for the atheistic philosopher to reconcile this heterodox doctrine with his orthodox belief in the Scriptures. This he does with surprising audacity. It has been seen that he goes to the length of asserting that there is no text in the Vedic Scriptures inculcating the existence of a God, (V. 12). Nothing could be more audacious, as there is scarcely anything in the Vedas which is more strongly or more frequently inculcated. These texts must therefore be explained away, or Atheism given up; and Kapila adopts the former alternative. He explains away the texts by saying, that those which make mention of a God are either glorifications of the liberated soul, or homages to popular gods.

Professor Max Müller lays indeed great stress on this orthodox maintenance of the authority of the Vedas. "Kapila," he says, "like the preacher of our own days,\* was accused of Atheism, but his philosophy was nevertheless admitted as orthodox, because in addition to sensuous perception and inductive reasoning, Kapila professed emphatically his belief in Revelation, i.e., in the Veda, and allowed to it a place among the recognised instruments of knowledge." Kapila was admitted to be orthodox, because

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\* A well-known Bampton Lecturer.

orthodoxy among the Hindus consisted in maintaining the authority of the Vedas, apart from all belief in God, or in the Vedic gods. Belief in God did not necessarily follow from such an orthodoxy, as Kapila himself contends.\* But we admit that this veneration for the Vedas is a most curious feature in the Sánkhya philosophy. It is perhaps the only system of belief known in the world which accepts a Revelation and rejects a God; and this orthodoxy, therefore, deserves a more detailed examination.

There is no question that the Sánkhya upholds the authority of the Vedas. It is frequently cited as conclusively settling disputed points. It is invoked to demolish even the belief in a God. Testimony seems to have been erected into an independent instrument of knowledge, distinct from inference, for no other visible reason than for maintaining intact the authority of the Vedas. Yet one may well feel inclined to doubt, whether all this veneration for the Vedas was sincere, at least whether it was so in the first teachers of the system. The authority of the Vedas is unhesitatingly appealed to whenever an opponent has to be silenced, or a favourite dogma to be established; and when texts are convenient for the purpose. When Vedic texts tell on the other side, they are explained away. Finally, the exposition to be found in the Aphorisms, of the grounds on which the Vedas are to be held infallible, is one of the most remarkable instances on record of the absurdities into which an acute and vigorous intellect is driven when forced to fight for an hypothesis which is seen by the advocate to be untenable. It is as follows :—

The Sánkhya denies that the Vedas are the work of a Divine author, for it denies the existence of a God.† It denies too that they are the work of *any* author, for this curious reason; if they had any author, he must be either emancipated or unemancipated. If emancipated, he would be without motive for the work; for he is free from all affections. If unemancipated, he would be wanting in the power and knowledge necessary for the production of such perfect works.‡ They are therefore nobody's work. If they are nobody's work, they must be self-existent and eternal, as *no other* supposition is possible. But even this is denied, because they themselves

\* *Vide supra*; also Aphorism 95, Book I.

† 46 Book V.

‡ 47 Book V.

contain texts for their being productions.\* Thus having very satisfactorily demonstrated that the Vedas are neither self-existent nor were called into existence by any one, the author quietly drops the matter, leaving his students to account in the best way they can for the existence of the Vedas. So acute a logician as the author of the Aphorisms could hardly have thought that he escaped the dilemma by saying that the knowledge of the Vedas is traditional. (43 Book V).

This criticism was undoubtedly eminently destructive of the very authority, the infallibility of which it was proposed to establish. Yet the critic doubtless felt that some reasons must be assigned for considering that as an authority which conclusively settles for him so many disputed points in his system. Accordingly he assigns a reason. He holds that the Vedas contain evidence of their own authority; it consists in the right knowledge they impart (51 Book V), thus leaving a door open for the utter rejection of the authority of the Vedas by any one who impeached the correctness of that knowledge.

Such are the theological doctrines of a system to which Buddhism stands, as M. Barthélemy St. Hilaire and others hold, in the obvious relation of offspring to parent. The real or pretended reverence for the Vedas, which the Sánkhya displayed, whilst mercilessly striking at the root of their authority, was cast off by the Buddhists who accepted the logic, but rejected the conclusion. But it may appear inexplicable, that, if the Atheism of the Sánkhya was so pronounced, so many profound scholars should fall into the mistake of accounting it a theistic philosophy. Whence did Udayana Áchárya get his *Adi vidván* of the Sánkhya?—and why should so great an authority as Professor Max Müller take upon himself to say, that the Sánkhya, like all other systems of Brahmanical philosophy, “admits in some form or other the existence of an Absolute and Supreme Being, the source of all that exists or seems to exist?”† The answer will be found in Aphorisms 56 and 57, Book III. They are as follows:—

LVI. “*Sa hi sarbabit, sarba-kartá.*” (He is All-wise and All-powerful).

LVII. “*Idriseswara siddhih siddhá.*” (The existence of such a God is settled).

\* 45 Book V.

† *Chips from a German Workshop*, Vol. I, p. 228.

But in reality these Aphorisms do not admit the existence of a God. These two Aphorisms simply refer to the soul, absorbed into Nature. To understand this, a brief recapitulation of the leading doctrines of the Sánkhya philosophy is necessary.

The totality of all material existence, including the intellect and its products, is denominated by the Sánkhya, Nature or *Prakriti*. All that is not included in it, is Soul (*Purusha*). The association of Soul with Nature is the cause of evil. The cessation of pain or evil is the supreme end of the Soul. This is emancipation. This emancipation can be obtained only by learning to discriminate between Nature and Soul. Such discrimination can be arrived at only through knowledge. Any state of existence other than this emancipation through knowledge is to be shunned, as not precluding the recurrence of evil. Even the fabled bliss of heaven is not desirable, as decay and death follow there. Not even is absorption into the Final Cause (Nature) desirable, for there is emergence again out of it. But the Soul which emerges out of Nature, comes out "All-wise and All-powerful." If such a being can be called Iswara, the Sánkhya philosopher has no objection to such terminology. But he distinctly stipulates (Aphorism 5, Book V) that the concession is to be regarded as a verbal concession only. There is nothing from which an admission of the existence of an Eternal Being, a Creator and a Governor of the Universe, may be inferred. What is admitted is simply the first Soul emerging out of Nature, which has attained to Infinite Power and knowledge by its previous absorption into Nature, but which is nevertheless uncreative, itself reproduced by Nature, and subject to evil. Such is the Sánkhya conception of Iswara. Such a Being is of course not God, nor was ever intended to be recognised as God. Almost all systems of belief which recognise a God, recognise Him as an Eternal Being, the Creator and Ruler of the Universe. No such Being is recognised by the Sánkhya. We decline to withhold the charge of Atheism from any system which ignores a Creator and a Moral Governor, and concedes only a supreme man uncreating and quiescent, and himself a finite being.

Professor Max Müller asserts, as we have stated, that this Being is, according to the Sánkhya, "the source of all, or all that seems to exist."<sup>1</sup> What we have said will, we hope, be sufficient to convince the reader that

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1. *Chips from a German Workshop*, Vol. I, p. 228.

the Sánkhyá holds no such doctrine, and that according to it Nature is the source of all things. If not, we will put here a collection of Aphorisms, which are certainly very emphatic.

Bk. II. Aph. 5.<sup>2</sup> The character of Creator belongs really to Nature, and is fictitiously attributed to Soul.

Bk. II. Aph. 6.<sup>3</sup> This is proved by Nature's products.

Bk. II. 8.<sup>4</sup> Even though there be conjunction of Soul with Nature, this power of giving rise to products does not exist in the Soul, just like the burning action of iron.

Bk. I. 74.<sup>5</sup> Meditately, the First (Nature) is the cause of all products, like Atoms.

Bk. I. 75.<sup>6</sup> Only two (Nature and Soul) are antecedent to all products. Since Soul is not Creator, Nature must be.

Bk. I. 137.<sup>7</sup> Nature's products prove her.

Bk. V. 12.<sup>8</sup> There is Scripture for this world being the product of Nature.

Many more texts might be quoted, if that were necessary. To hold, therefore, that the Sánkhyá attributes the origin of all things to an Absolute and Supreme Being, is, we think, an obvious error.

We have no room to discuss at length the relation of the Buddhistic doctrine of Nirvána to the Sánkhyá doctrine of Emancipation. Max Müller himself admits that both doctrines emerge from the same starting point. "The complete cessation of three kinds of pain is the highest aim of man," is Kapila's first *sutra*. But "their roads are so far apart," Max Müller observes, "and their goals change so completely, that it is difficult to understand how, almost by common consent, Buddha is supposed either to have followed in the steps of Kapila, or to have changed Kapila's philosophy into religion." But no one ever thought of asserting a complete identity of doctrine in the two systems. Similarity is not identity, and is often compatible with

2. *Prakriti vāstave cha purusha-syādhyásasiddhi.*

3. *Káryatastatsiddheh.*

4. *Janyayoge api tatsiddhir nanjasyenáyodáhabat.*

5. *Adya hetutá tadvárá pálamparye apyanubat.*

6. *Purva bhábīwe dwayoreka tara sya háné anyatara yoga.*

7. *Tatkáryatastatsiddher nápalápá.*

8. *Śruti rapi pradhána káryatwasya.*

very wide divergence. A great deal is gained if the same keen sense of the overwhelming burden of human misery, and the same yearning for its cessation as the supreme felicity of man, are found to form the backbone of both doctrines. Nor is the divergence so great as Professor Max Müller seems to think. The Sánkhya places the supreme felicity of man in the complete cessation of all Experience.\* Buddhism only goes a step beyond, and places it in the cessation, not only of all Experience, but of the Experiencer also. In reality there is no difference between these two doctrines; for the cessation of experience, including purely subjective experience, can proceed only from the annihilation of the Sentient Being whose nature is to experience. But we cannot credit these primitive thinkers with having arrived at this result, and we will allow that according to their ideas the difference was great. But whatever the difference, it was one only of degree, not of kind; and does not at all militate against the hypothesis that the one doctrine was derived from the other. So great is the affinity between the two, that the following exposition of the doctrine of Nirvána by Professor Max Müller himself, would accurately describe the Sánkhya doctrine of Emancipation, if only the word "experience" were substituted for "existence." In that substitution is the key to all the difference between the two.

"He [the Buddhist] starts from the idea that the highest object is to escape pain. Life, in his eyes, is nothing but misery; birth the cause of all evil, from which even death cannot deliver him, because he believes in an eternal cycle of existence, or in transmigration. There is no deliverance from evil, except by breaking through the prison-walls, not only of life, but of existence, and by extirpating the last cause of existence."

We have said what we had to say regarding the existence of similarity between Buddhism and the Sánkhya philosophy. We regret our limits do not permit us to proceed to the examination of the question, whether the existence of this similarity between the two doctrines leads to the inference that Buddhism borrowed its philosophy from Kapila, or to the inference that Kapila based his philosophy on Buddhism. The discussion must be left for another occasion.

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\* Of all experience, pleasurable as well as painful, for pleasure is variegated by pain; therefore the wise cast it into the scale and reckon it as so much pain.—8. Bk. VI.

**THE CONFESSIONS OF A YOUNG BENGAL**

This article appeared anonymously in *Mookerjee's Magazine* (Dec. 1872, pp. 337-42), edited by Sambhu Chandra Mookerjee. That its writer was no other than Bankim Chandra will be evident from the following passage in a letter which he addressed to Sambhu Chandra on 5th January, 1873 :—

“ Pray don't insert that bit of confession anywhere. Campbell and Bernard know enough of me to be able to identify this penitent at once. Not that they would hang me if they did, but it would not be at all agreeable.”

That, in the outward circumstances of social and personal life, English-educated Bengalis are rapidly getting Anglicised, few English-educated Bengalis will deny. The stamp of the Anglo-Saxon foreigner is upon our houses, our furniture, our carriages, our food, our drink, our dress, our very familiar letters and conversation. He who runs may read it on every inch of our outward life. We build, and fit up, our houses, according to English ideas of architectural beauty, ventilation and general comfort. Our ancestors, in building houses of any pretension to grandeur, invariably postponed all considerations of the ease and comfort of the human inmates to a pious regard for the besetting accommodation of the various celestials during their thirteen appointed visits in the course of the twelve months. The *Poojah Dâlân*, the apartment dedicated to the idols, was invariably that portion of the house upon which the lion's share of the whole estimated cost was spent, which was most adorned with the architectural decorations of the time, which, in its dimensions, surpassed every other apartment,—which, in short, determined by its style and magnificence, the owner's position in society. In the houses built by English-educated Bengalis, the *Poojah Dâlân* is conspicuous only by its absence, so much so that it would not, perhaps, be altogether superfluous to refer to a piece of philological evidence to prove that it was not always so:—in many rural villages in Bengal, *Dâlân* is, to this day, synonymous with a brick-built house. Chairs, tables, punkahs,—seldom meant to be pulled, American clocks, glassware of variegated hues, pictures for which the *Illustrated London News* is liberally laid under contribution, kerosene lamps, book-shelves filled with Reynolds' *Mysteries*, Tom Paine's *Age of Reason* and the *Complete Poetical Works of Lord Byron*, English Musical-boxes, compose the fashionable furniture of the sitting-rooms of Young Bengal. Not to speak of Calcutta and its suburbs, it was only the other day that the Lieutenant-Governor congratulated the enlightened gentry of Rajshaye upon what struck His Honour as the most prominent concrete manifestation of English civilization in that district,—dog-carts, to wit. The solemn assurance of His Honour that he was not joking was perfectly needless. Whatever might be the degree of confidence which said enlighten-

ed gentry reposed in His Honour's declarations touching his complete code of self-government for Bengal, there is not the shadow of a shade of doubt that their own opinion was only too faithfully echoed by His Honour's observations touching the dog-carts. We have ceased to be strict vegetarians and teetotallers. We have no objection,—on principle,—to dine on roast beef or veal cutlets, nor any, either on principle or in practice, to *drink*, in the idiomatic English sense and after the English fashion. Our conversation is nine parts broken English, and one part pure Bengali. We have exchanged the cumbrous forms of Bengali epistolary correspondence for those of Cook's Universal Letter-writer, and the tight-fitting jackets and loose-flowing *Chapkans* of our grandfathers for shirts *à l'anglaise* and *Chapkans* that are every day steadily approaching towards the shape and size of English coats, to say nothing of our English shoes, the eyesore of official Anglo-Indians.

English education, administered with the most rigid economy and the example of Englishmen, wrapped up with the threefold covering of national, political and religious exclusiveness have, in a single generation, sufficed to work these changes in the external features of Bengali Society. Paradoxical as it may seem, the second is by much the most powerful agency of the two, though, without *some* share of the first, it cannot have free scope for its operation. A six months' visit to England, accomplished with the lightest possible equipment of English, does far more to Anglicize one's tastes, manners and fashion than a lifelong devotion to English literature at home. Cases of conflict between the action of English education and that of English example are not rare, in which the result has proved to demonstration the superior energy of the latter.

The very idea that external life is a worthy subject of the attention of a rational being, except in its connections with religion, is, amongst ourselves, unmistakably of English origin. In spite of their emphatic inculcation of the duty of self-preservation, the prevailing tendency of our Shastras was towards a severe asceticism, founded upon a profound feeling of the transitoriness and unreality of this world.

Our ancestors thought and felt, with the immortal poet of universal human nature, with the one man in the world's literature whose works hold up a mirror to every possible phasis of man's inner life,—

Poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth,  
Fool'd by those rebel powers that thee array,

Why dost thou pine within and suffer dearth,  
Painting thy outward walls so costly gay ?

Why so large cost, having so short a lease,  
Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend ?  
Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,  
Eat up thy charge ? is this thy body's end ?

Then, soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss,  
And let that pine to aggravate thy store;  
Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross;  
Within be fed, without be rich no more :

So shalt thou feed on Death, that feeds on men,  
And Death once dead, there's no more dying then.

No doubt, they did not,—without ceasing to be human beings, they could not,—quite act up to these sentiments; but they could never justify to their conscience any care bestowed upon food and raiment for their own sake. English civilization has pulled down the three hundred and thirty million deities of Hinduism, and set up, in the total space once occupied by them, its own tutelary deities, Comfort and his brother, Respectability.

We lack the candour and the courage to confess this change of faith, but whichever way we look at the matter,—whether by direct self-examination or by indirect study of our inner in our outer life, we are forced to admit that it is to this complexion we have come at last.

We are labouring in downright earnest to break down the joint-family system. We are endeavouring to raise the national standard of living and to foster independence of character. Fine phrases. Have you reflected for a moment on their real signification ? You are tearing asunder the only bond of social union in a society which has yet to learn the very first lessons in the art of co-operation. Or do you, after all, in spite of your petitionings and memorializings and the incessant outpourings of your newspaper press, really suppose that the 'Village Municipality' will, as a school of co-operation, supersede the antiquated joint Hindu family ? What, again, have you to say to the inhumanity of defeating the rational expectations of your relations—expectations founded on the uniform experience and traditions of ages ? To take the lowest ground, are you blind to the

economical convenience—if you have an arithmetical turn of mind and some knowledge of money-matters, you can easily estimate it in solid Rupees, Annas and Pice,—are you blind to the economical convenience of dwelling and messing together to the bulk of your countrymen who are little removed from a condition of abject pauperism ? You are bringing into fashion a habit of heartless isolation which, very unlike your highly volatile ‘High Education,’ is steadily filtering into the inferior strata of the community. Fostering independence, forsooth ! Do not lay that flattering unction to your soul. Your interest and your duty are so happily in unison in this same matter of fostering independence of character in your poor relations that you ought really to pause and consider what you are about. One thing is quite clear : this zeal for the formation of a national habit of self-reliance never shows itself, except in the sunshine of comparative prosperity.

We have cast away caste. We have outlived the absurdity of a social classification based upon the accident of birth. But we are not such ultra-radicals as to adopt for our watchword the impracticable formula of “Equality and Fraternity.” Thank God, we are not so far Frenchified as that. We have received a High English education. Our culture is thoroughly English and we mean to reconstruct society according to English notions. Do you wish to know our definition of a respectable man ? Here is one which will give you as correct an idea as any other.

Q. What do you mean by “respectable.”

A. “*He always kept a gig.*” (Thurtell’s Trial).

It is the balance at the banker’s which fixes a man’s place in society; the cumulative humanities of a hundred generations are nothing to the purpose.

Such of us as are gifted with exceptionally disciplined minds and have appreciatively imbibed the best and the most recent English teaching concerning individuality and non-conformity, eat, dress and conduct ourselves in society exactly like Englishmen, the usual allowance for the imperfection of a first attempt being, of course, made. The Bengali accent refuses to be quite forgotten, the English idiom every now and then proves quite treacherous, above all, the transmigration from ‘black’ to ‘white’ defies the existing resources of chemistry and cosmetics, but as regards the main points of first, a scrupulously exact English costume, with its collateral incidents of occa-

sional invitations to dinner from Englishmen and occasional salaams from Railway porters and cabmen, and secondly, a habitual manifestation, by word, look and gesture, of a thorough contempt for 'niggers', their attempt is usually crowned with success. Who shall censure them? If the national costume of Bengalis has become a badge of subjection, surely the sooner it—the costume—is cast aside the better.

Our Deism, our Theism, our Brahmoism, progressive or ultra-progressive, our Comp(sic)teism—apparently an indigenous religious development, the morality of which was recently discussed, under that strange designation, with equal ability and learning in more than one issue of a Calcutta newspaper,—what are all these *isms* at bottom but merely so many different embodiments of a strong desire to exempt ourselves from the obligations of Hinduism. No enlightened human being can endure semi-barbarous restrictions concerning food—and drink; no enlightened human being can afford to forego the commonest comforts of life for finding means for the extravagantly expensive superstitions of benighted parents; no enlightened human being can find it in his heart to respect a man whose only claim to respect is founded on an old-fashioned ascetic purity of life, and an intimate acquaintance with a literature, full of false history, false geography and false physics; no enlightened human being can bring himself to believe in the moral excellency of perpetual widowhood; and soon to the end of the chapter of grievances. The necessary minor premises being assumed, sound logic compels us to cry with one voice, Hinduism must be destroyed.

Agreed. But the spiritual nature of man abhors a vacuum. Between our various *isms*, the Hindu code of personal and social ethics has been well-nigh wholly repealed, and its precepts are universally seen and felt to be more honoured in the breach than in the observance. Where is our new code of morality? Where is the new public opinion to enforce its rules? Where is the man amongst us who in personal purity, in meekness, in self-forgetfulness, in genuine non-political patriotic feeling, in tenderness for the least sentient thing, in lifelong and systematic devotion to knowledge and virtue for their own sake, can stand a moment's comparison with the better order of minds nurtured in the cradle of Hinduism? Let the tree be judged by its fruit.



**THE STUDY OF HINDU PHILOSOPHY**

Reprinted from *Mookerjee's Magazine* for May 1873, pp. 160-69.

As yet no serious attempt appears to have been made to estimate the value of Hindu Thought and its influence on the progress of civilization. It is generally assumed that outside the limits of India, Hindu Civilization has exercised little influence. Perhaps the assumption is, on the whole, correct. The intellectual relations of Greece and through it, of Europe, to India will perhaps never admit of being fully cleared up. But apart from the question of its influence on the world at large, the history of the Hindu Intellect has a value of its own which has been but imperfectly recognised. If Europe presents to the student the more perfect type of civilization, India offers to him the more instructive though less interesting study of arrested development and decay. The intellectual history of Europe bears to that of India the same relation as physiology does to pathology, while the one presents the richer field for the investigation of the laws of the healthy and vigorous growth of civilization, the other furnishes greater facilities of studying it under the conditions of disease and death.

The study of Sanskrit is making its way in Europe, and the history and the literature of India occupy, it is satisfactory to know, a considerable share of the attention of her scholars at the present day. But it is to be regretted that the literature of Indian mythology and ritual should engross the attention of the learned, to the exclusion of the higher forms of intellectual activity which were developed at a later period of Hindu history. It must, of course, be admitted, that Hindu mythology is a subject of universal interest on account of its real or supposed affinity to the primitive beliefs of all the Aryan races, while Hindu Philosophy has no higher claim than that which arises from its being exclusively Indian. To us, indeed, who are the children of the soil, Hindu Philosophy is a far more important study than Hindu mythology. To us the nearer and more local is of greater interest than that which is the common property of all nations, and the real significance of which is lost in the dim shades of remote antiquity.

We have not, however, by any means shown any readiness to recognise Hindu Philosophy as an important branch of study. It is, indeed, still taught with reverence, and learnt with awe, in the secluded *tuls* of Nadiya

and other seats of ancient learning, but the philosophy of the *tols* is the most barren and unprofitable study in which the human intellect can engage itself. Philosophy as taught by the pandits, is simply a storehouse of verbal quibbles, and high proficiency in it is considered synonymous with high proficiency in the art of profitless wrangling. Why Jagadisa should have used nine letters where he might have used five, or of how many significations an ambiguous word in Gadadhara's Commentary can admit, are regarded as the highest problems of which it is allowed to the human intellect to attempt the solution. The sum of useful human knowledge would in no way be diminished, if by some fortunate accident, the philosophy of the *tols* disappeared from the face of the earth.

There are two aspects in which the natives of India can regard the study of Hindu Philosophy. We can study it for its own sake,—for the philosophical knowledge which it will yield. We can also study it for the sake of the light it can throw on the past history of India,—on the great social changes of which it has often been the cause and often the consequence. It will be generally admitted that at the present day, in the full blaze of the light which the science and the philosophy of Europe pours upon us, the value of Hindu Philosophy, for the sake of the knowledge of Nature which it can impart, is insignificant.

The principal value of Hindu Philosophy consists in its bearings on history and on sociology. As the great causes which have influenced the destiny of India, which have moulded the national character, taught the Hindu to despise the blessings of existence and to look upon inaction as the ideal of human happiness; as causes in short to which a very great deal of the characteristics of national life may well be referred, the importance of the philosophical doctrines of India cannot be overestimated. There are, however, no indications of any tendency among native scholars to take up the study in earnest. Natives of India, so far as they have hitherto interested themselves in its past history, have generally followed in the wake of Europeans, throwing little handfuls\* of materials upon the structures reared by the giants of another clime. It is a painful proof of the absence of originality and vigour in the intellectual character of the natives of the

\* Every native of India must remember with pride that there is at least one remarkable exception to whom such language cannot apply.

present day that we little relish pursuits which are not sanctioned by the example and the approval of Europeans, that we dare not ascend heights which they have not attempted to climb. The traces of European footprints must encourage us in any journey we undertake, we lack the courage—not the ability—to venture upon an untrodden path. There is always present to us a morbid dread of failure which itself is a powerful cause of failure.

Hindu Philosophy has not been wholly neglected in Europe. But its spirit has never been seized—it remains to be understood. Natives of the country alone can fall into grooves of thought which they imbibe with their earliest education, but which appear unintelligible and grotesque to the foreigner. The study of Hindu Philosophy in Europe has therefore been barren of results. It is, on the other hand, pursued by a certain section of native scholars with lifelong devotion, but only as the science and the art of verbal quibbling. Here, too, has the study of Hindu Philosophy been barren of results. Natives who have fitted themselves for the work by that wider culture which a complete acquaintance with European science alone can impart, are in a position peculiarly suited for giving to Hindu Philosophy its proper position in the history of human achievements.

But no study is likely to be fruitful of results if carried on without a system. The majority of those who pursue knowledge for its own sake pursue it after an aimless and desultory fashion. An aimless and desultory pursuit of knowledge may be productive of good in other cases, but in the case of Hindu Philosophy it can lead to no good whatever. Hindu Philosophy must be studied with certain definite objects or not studied at all. My object in the present paper is to suggest some of the leading points on which attention should be bestowed in a special manner.

I *The relation of Hindu Philosophy to Hindu Mythology*—A sort of hazy perception that Hindu Mythology is in a great measure the parent of Hindu Philosophy is not wanting among those who have bestowed any attention on either. It is again believed on the other hand, that the philosophical systems arose out of that reaction against the mythological religion which culminated in Buddhism, and that while some systems were aggressive and hostile to the national religion, others aimed at its conservation, and attempted to rebuild the fabric of superstition on rational foundations. All this may be true, perhaps is so, but the great problems of history still remain unexplained. How is it that we find a cumbrous mythology and an absurd

ritual flourishing gaily side by side with enlightened rationalism and searching scepticism, nay, not only flourishing side by side with them, but riding triumphant over both ? Again, without questioning the general affiliation of philosophy to mythology, it is of great importance to trace how each individual myth developed itself into a philosophical idea. Lastly, it is of still greater moment to ascertain, if we can, the national modes of thought common both to philosophy and to mythology, which gave its distinctive character to each and which influence the national character even at the present day.

I will try to explain what I mean by an illustration. We find the principle of triple existence running throughout both Hindu Philosophy and Hindu Mythology. The Supreme Soul has, in philosophy, the three-fold attributes of Goodness (*satwa*), Passion (*rajas*) and Darkness (*tamas*). Next, as separate impersonations of each of these three attributes of the Supreme Soul, we have the Pauranic Trinity, Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. This trinity has no existence in Vedic literature, but there we find another trinity as the more primitive representatives of the Pauranic Triad, *viz.*, Agni, Vayu and Surya. (Nirukta VII., 5).\*

These, again, in their turn represent the Light. Agni the terrestrial light, Vayu the light of the atmosphere, and Surya the light of the sky.† This triple light is traced through the Nirukta (XII., 19), to the three steps of Vishnu in the Rig-Veda. The following is the explanation from the Nirukta :—

“ Vishnu strides over this, whatever exists. He plants his step in three-fold manner, *i.e.*, for a threefold existence, on earth, in the atmosphere, and in the sky according to Sakpuni.”‡

The verse in the Rig-Veda which is explained here is as follows :—

“ Vishnu strode over this (universe); in three places he planted his step : ” etc.§

So that here at least we can trace a philosophical idea to its source in a myth in the Rig-Veda. No other intelligible explanation can be offered

\* Muir's *Sanskrit Texts*, IV., p. 57, et seq.

† *Ibid.*

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

how philosophy came to announce so fanciful a doctrine as that of the three attributes of the Supreme Being.

He who will write the history of Hindu asceticism, from its first appearance in the Vedic Theology to its most complete development in the Buddhist philosophy, will earn a title to the gratitude of India. Lecky has shown, with a power of gloomy narration rarely surpassed, the evil influence of asceticism upon the destinies of mediaeval Europe, but no country in the world has suffered more deeply from its baneful power than India. Both the mythology and the philosophy were intensely imbued with the ascetic spirit. Buckle has shown how the imposing aspects and unconquerable forces of nature create superstition. Imagination invests these mysterious powers of nature with human volition and superhuman caprice and aptitude for mischief. After man has once assumed their unlimited capacity for taking offence, his next step is to assume that they are constantly offended at intentional and unintentional human actions. Hence arises the sense of *Sin*. The sense of *Sin* leads to Penance. Wrathful divinities must be appeased by suitable expiations. When man is unable to rise to the lofty doctrine of Repentance, the only form which penance can assume is that of physical privation. Hence the rise of asceticism in Hindu religion.

Philosophy, seeking a loftier ideal and proceeding on a more rational basis, discarded the notion of *Sin*. But the same causes were at work. The mighty energies of nature worked with impressive force on every side. With no more than the appliances of primitive life, existence was felt to be a burden in a climate and a country which overpowered human powers and neutralized human energies. What had appeared to the theologian as the vengeful action of offended divinities appeared to the philosopher as the omnipotent but natural causes of human misery. Hence in philosophy the sense of *Suffering* took the place of the sense of *Sin*. These two notions, the sense of suffering and the sense of sin, run side by side throughout Hindu Philosophy and Hindu Mythology respectively. The end and aim of the Sánkhya is the Cessation of Pain by the Cessation of all Experience. The Buddhist, not satisfied with the Cessation of Experience, aims at the Annihilation of the Experiencing Soul as the only effectual means of securing freedom from misery to man. The Vedanta declines to believe that so much apparent misery can be real and resolves existence into a mass of illusions. The Yogi in the madness of despair constructs a fanciful machinery for con-

quering the powers of nature. Everywhere the philosopher labours under an overwhelming sense of human misery and directs all his efforts against it. The vast field over which these two leading notions, the notion of sin and the notion of suffering, have spread, giving rise to asceticism, to fatalism, to apathy in politics and to sensuality in poetry, is one of the most interesting subjects of study with which the Hindu can occupy himself.

II. *The relation of Hindu Philosophy to true Science.*—It must be borne in mind that Philosophy in India had never the restricted signification attached to it in modern Europe, but was co-extensive in meaning with the knowledge of Nature. Philosophy therefore included Science. The Hindu laboured under the disadvantage of an erroneous method. An intense theological spirit rarely leads to anything but the deductive method, and the Hindu method was almost solely and purely deductive. Observation and Experiment were considered beneath the dignity of Philosophy and Science. Nor is even deduction as a rule pushed on its legitimate consequences. First principles are assumed on no grounds, and with the most perfect weapons of deductive logic at his command, the Hindu thinker contents himself with the most fanciful inferences. Mighty glimpses of truth reveal themselves to men of almost inspired intellect, but the Hindu sage will not follow them out to their legitimate consequences.

When the gardeners of Florence found that the column of water in the water-pump will not rise to any greater height than thirty-two feet, the idea of the atmosphere exerting a pressure upon the water outside flashed upon Torricelli like an inspiration. But Torricelli did not stop at the inspired thought. "If the pressure of the atmosphere sustained a column of air," he reasoned, "it ought to sustain a column of mercury also." He experimented with a glass tube filled with mercury, which verified his conclusion. Here was a splendid triumph, but European energy of thought would not stop here. Pascal argued, that if the atmosphere supports the mercurial column, the higher we ascend the lower ought the column to sink. Pascal took a barometric column to the Puy de Dome and the column sank.

A Hindu philosopher in Torricelli's place would have contented himself with simply announcing in an aphoristic *sutra* that the air had weight. No measure of the quantity of its pressure would have been given; no experiment would have been made with the mercury; no Hindu Pascal would have ascended the Himalayas with a barometric column in hand. To take a

parallel case. The diurnal rotation of the earth is shadowed forth in the *Aitareya Brahmana*\* Arya Bhatta distinctly affirms it "The starry firmament is fixed," says he, "it is the earth which, continually revolving, produces the rising and the setting of the constellations and the planets"† In addition to this, the apparent annual motion of the sun and the periodical motion of the planets were well known. The only legitimate deduction from the combination of these three facts, viz., the diurnal rotation of the earth the fixity of the heavenly bodies, and the apparent annual motion of the sun, was the heliocentric theory. But the heliocentric theory was never positively put forward—never sought to be proved—never accepted and never followed out to the establishment of the further laws of the universe. In modern Europe, the announcement of the Copernican theory rendered certain the future discovery of the laws of Kepler and of the great law of Universal Gravitation. In India Arya Bhatta's remarkable announcement rendered certain that nothing further would come of it.

Examples might be multiplied. But the point for enquiry is, did India make no contribution of value to the sum of human knowledge? Did no power of intellect suffice to neutralize the fatal error in method? Is the intellectual history of India nothing but the longest page in that unwritten chapter of the world's history—the history of human error? If not, if truth is still to be gleaned from the recesses of Hindu philosophy, where and how can we find it? What is in fact the real place of Hindu philosophy in the history of Science?

Those who follow with admiring reverence Mill's exposition of the Law of Causation must be startled to find that the Hindu Naiyayikas arrived at precisely the same result as Mill. The following is Mill's definition of Cause, the net result of his exposition —

"The cause of a phenomenon" is "the antecedent or the confluence of antecedents on which it is invariably and unconditionally consequent."

This is nearly identical with the Naiyayika's definition, which is as follows —

*"Anyatha siddhi sunyasja niyata purabartita karanatuam"*

\* Colebrooke's Essays n p 392

† Dr Haug's Translation n p 142

Literally translated it runs thus :—

“ Being a cause is being the invariable antecedent of that which cannot be brought about without it.”

There are two elements in Mill’s definition, *viz.*, the concurrence of antecedents, and the unconditionality of the consequent, which may at first be missed in the Sanskrit definition. But this defect is apparent only. The aphoristic form in which Hindu Philosophy was taught precluded the concurrence of antecedents being prominently brought forward in the definition; it was sufficient that the definition did not exclude such concurrence. But the point is explained and illustrated at great length in other texts. For the *unconditionality* of Mill the Nyáya substitutes an awkward periphrasis, which, however, in reality signifies *unconditionability*, and is elsewhere explained in the Nyáya to do so. Mill explains unconditionality by the illustration afforded by the sequence of day and night. Night is the invariable antecedent of day, but is not its cause, because if the sun did not rise there would be no day. Day is not, therefore, the unconditional consequent of night. Precisely the same thing is meant by “ *anyatha siddhi sunyasya*. ” Day cannot be brought about without the rising of the sun; therefore the rising of the sun and not night is the cause of day, though night is also the invariable antecedent of day. The identity of the two definitions is remarkable.

The point for enquiry is, what measure of sterling gold like this can be found amid the dross of Hindu Philosophy ?

It is by no means so small as is generally believed.

This strictly philosophical conception of the law of causation suggests an important point, *viz.*, the recognition of Law as the only agency in the government of the universe. That which specially distinguishes the superiority of modern Europe over the Europe of the past and over all other countries whatever, is this unflinching recognition of the absolute sovereignty of Law. I have not space to dwell on the point, but I must indicate that the same spirit reigns over the higher forms of Hindu thought, such as the Sánkhya and the Nyáya. Whatever the character of inferior schools, such as the Mimánsá, Law is recognised as supreme in the more advanced systems. No divine interposition, no especial providence, no miracle, not even the initial Creative Act is recognised here. Indeed after the great law of causation has once been seized in a true philosophical spirit,

the recognition of the Reign of Law must supersede all theological conceptions. So it did in the superior systems of Hindu Philosophy.

III *The effect of Hindu Philosophy on the political and social life of the Hindus*—This is by far the most important point in the study of which enquirer into the Hindu Philosophy can engage. A single question, such for instance, as the share which philosophical systems like the Sankhya had in causing the birth and promoting the growth of such a stupendous social revolution as Buddhism, is alone of engrossing interest. But this portion of the subject is so important that it will not admit of being treated at the close of this paper. It must be reserved for a future occasion.



**LETTERS IN THE HASTIE CONTROVERSY**



## PREFACE

These letters of Bankim Chandra appeared in *The Statesman* newspaper in connection with a controversy about the Hindu religion started by the Rev W Hastie, Principal, General Assembly's Institution, Calcutta

The occasion which gave rise to this controversy was the performance, on the 17th September, 1882, of the *dansagar shradh* ceremony of an old lady of the Sova bazar Raj family, the grandmother of Maharaja Harendra Krishna Dev Bahadur

An elaborate description of the ceremony was published in *The Statesman* on the 20th September. The spacious quadrangle of the Rajbari, the various articles requisite for the *dansagar*, the family idol Gopinathji placed on a silver throne all these were duly noticed. The presence of nearly four thousand Brahman scholars (*Adhyapaks*) from the principal *to's* of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and other guests from all sections of the community was specially mentioned. There was a long list of the English educated Bengalis who were present at the ceremony, and it is interesting to observe that this list included men like the Maharaja Sir Jatindra Mohan Tagore, Kristodas Pal and Dr Rajendra Lala Mitra.

As the report went on to observe, "a *shradh* ceremony on so grand and expensive a scale has not been known in Calcutta for many years" An extract from the report as to what happened in the evening and on the next few days will not be found uninteresting, and may help the reader to follow the controversy —

"In the evening some ten to twelve thousand beggars received charity in the shape of small coin. On the second day over 2000 Brahmins were feasted on the third day the *Kayasts* had a feast, while some 3500 ladies partook of a banquet on the fourth day. The fifth and last day the tenants and domestics were entertained."

This innocuous account of the ceremony was taken in very bad grace by Hastie, who wrote to *The Statesman*, a series of letters on "The Sobha Bazaar Rajbree Shradh" the first of which, headed "The most striking Facts of the Shradh" was published two days after the report, on the 22nd September. To him, it appeared very surprising that the well educated Maharaja Harendra Krishna Bahadur still paid "Divine honor to the family idol," and that men like Dr Rajendra Lala Mitra, Kristo Das Pal, Maharaja Sir Jatindra Mohan Tagore could be present on such an occasion "to smile approval on this perfection of brahmanic ceremonialism." He had no intention (he asserted) of giving "the slightest pain to the mourners," but the account had "forced" upon him "the problem of the relation of our English

education and civilisation to the traditional Idolatry, and more particularly the question of the moral and personal responsibility of the educated and enlightened heads of the Hindoo community for its continued countenance and perpetuation." In his own words :—

" If we did not know it from experience, it would sound utterly incredible to be told that these cultivated and accomplished gentlemen, some of them Fellows of the Calcutta University and Members of learned European Societies, were found in the centre of this vast crowd on Sunday morning last, whose central purpose was the worshipping of what they at least knew to be but a gawky image gilded and adorned to attract the vulgar eye, but,—like Old Marley—"as dead as a door nail," and, happily on that account, incomparably less dangerous than the living god would have been, as we know from his history, to the virtue of the 3,500 ladies who partook of the banquet on the fourth day."

In this his first letter, he merely raised the question, and proposed in subsequent communications to set forth his views on the subject with "all the breadth and tolerance of Christian charity," "as a friend of Hindu society and as a worker for its reformation."

Hastie was nothing if not prompt in the fulfilment of his self-appointed task; his second letter, "The Supposed Necessity of Idolatry," appeared on the very next day, the 23rd September. He would not "do the educated gentlemen, who publicly took part in this great *shradh*, the wrong of even entertaining the supposition that they are themselves really Idolaters." Their participation in "idolatrous ceremonies," appeared to be "at the best, but a kindly accommodation to the popular prejudice and ignorance," like giving dolls to children, and not "essentially pure and ultimately defensible." The discussion of this question at great length from the philosophical standpoint did not prevent him from fortifying his arguments by referring to "the horrid and bloody Kali, with her protruding tongue, her necklace of skulls, and her girdle of giant hands," "the elephant-headed, huge-paunched Ganapati," or "the Krishna cult," which at its very best, appeared to him to be "but the apotheosis of sensual desire and the idolatry of merely finite life." And he remembered how, while St. Paul was at Athens, "his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry," and he conjured up the vision of the great Apostle "pouring forth again the oration" which he had delivered to the Athenians on Mars Hill, for the spiritual benefit of the "men of Calcutta," if he "had appeared in the palatial Rajbarree compound" on the day of the *shradh*.

Three days later, on the 26th September, appeared Hastie's third letter, "The Alleged Harmlessness of Idolatry." It treated mainly of St. Paul's mission, and of Hinduism, his ideas about the latter having been derived from European scholars. He was certain that he was in no danger of cherishing wrong notions about Hinduism; he expressed himself quite frankly on this point :

"Let it not be said that our European scholars do not understand Hinduism It is they who have seen all its mysteries first, in the clear modern daylight of contrasting light and shade, and who have explained its every enigma to its puzzled and petrified priests "

To him, Hinduism was a "monstrous system," its gods and goddesses "persons of nations of evil," its "sublimest spiritual states" "but the reflex of physiological conditions in disease", it was "the one chief cause of all the demoralisation and degradation of India" In his opinion, "The Hindu alone still disgraces the nobility of the Aryan race by a Syrian worship of idols, inflaming him with lust, under every green tree" Working himself up into a fine frenzy, he apostrophized thus —

"O Bharat Varsha, the once fair daughter of the Morning, how hast thou fallen from thy throne of pride and become the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth !"

His missionary activity, however, did not end with this outburst, for a few days later (29th September) appeared his fourth letter on "The Ultimate Philosophy of Brahmanism" He had (he claimed) stormed "the outworks of the popular idolatry," but that was not enough, there was "the great metaphysical abstraction," believed to be "the impregnable inner citadel of the whole system," which had to be reduced Accordingly, Hastie proposed to show, with the help of "the daring scholars of the West," that the metaphysical system of "the speculative Rishi" "cannot answer even one of the great questions of our modern world, and that the whole of the Brahmanic theology never really solved a single problem of human life or thought" The rest of the letter is taken up with an exposition and estimate of the Brahmanical philosophy, in course of which there was an extensive quotation from Monier Williams's summary of the Vedantist's creed, where Hastie found "the great esoteric mystery of Brahmanism at last open to view, and stripped of all its excrecent multi-form shapes and modifications" He repudiated the suggestion that the missionaries were "entirely ignorant of what Brahmanism is," or that they had "come, without reason, to interfere with the hallowed destiny of a chosen people," and concluded by declaring that

"it is only CHRISTIANITY, with its revelation of the Divine Personality in all the fulness of His self-existent thought and eternal purpose, that can rationally take the place of the falling Brahmanism, so as to reconcile the sons of India, in a pure and blessed life, to the universe around them and to themselves "

This then, was Hastie's cure for what he thought to be the harmful effects of Hindu religious practices His views, elaborated in the above four letters, did not, however, pass unnoticed He had started a controversy, and from the 25th September onwards the correspondence columns of *The Statesman* were filled for some days with letters from all sorts of persons, some protesting against, others supporting his

standpoint. These, as also Hastic's letter on "The Social Changes of a Century in India" which appeared in two instalments on the 2nd and 3rd October, need not detain us, as Bankim Chandra, who joined the controversy later, did not notice any of them.

He was at that time posted at Jajpur, in the district of Cuttack. His first letter, "The Modern St. Paul," on Hastic and his attitude, appeared in *The Statesman* on the 6th October. It seems he was not inclined to disclose his identity at first, for we find him using a pen-name, "Ram Chandra." It was a very short letter in which Hastic was asked to "render himself better acquainted with the doctrines of the Hindoo religion." He was further advised to study "critically all the systems of Hindoo philosophy," not "under European scholars," but "with a Hindoo, with one who believes in them."

Hastic's reply "The Modern Ram Chandra" appeared the very next day. He did not relish Ram Chandra's refusal to give blind credence to European scholars, and asserted that "both the Sanskrit language and the Sanskrit literature are much better understood at this moment in Europe and America than they are in India." In support of his statement, he quoted a line of Vedic verse, and challenged the "supercilious and self-confident Ram Chandra" to give "an intelligible explanation" of the same, without the aid of European learning. There was also a sling at his adversary for writing under a pseudonym and not "under his own honest patronymic."

Another letter of Hastic's, entitled "The Challenge Renewed," appeared in *The Statesman* on the 14th October. He thanked the editor for publishing his letters on the *shradh* and stated that these, along with his closing letter on Hindu idolatry—which the editor had twice declined to publish, were being printed in book form. He also asked for permission to include in his book the other letters which had appeared in *The Statesman*, as he wanted "to give the other side a fair hearing." He, however, did not let slip this opportunity of publicly repeating his challenge made in his previous letter, and asked "the modern RAM CHANDRA" and "all the Pundits of Bengal" to "come forward and bend this bow of a Western Janaka."

Ram Chandra's second letter, "European Versions of Hindoo Doctrines," appeared on the 16th October. Bankim here takes great pains to make his position clear as regards European Sanskritists. He explains at great length why, in spite of his profound respect for their learning, he had advised Hastic not to take his lessons on Hinduism from them. And, to satisfy Hastic about his identity, Bankim enclosed his card with the letter, to which, however, he still subscribed as Ram Chandra.

Hastic was very prompt in his reply; his letter, "Ram Chandra Redivivus," appeared the very next day, the 17th October. He had singled out Ram Chandra as the strongest of all his assailants for a reply, and, now that he knew who he was, the reformer was "deeply disappointed to find" him not to be "the learned Shivaite priest and protagonist of local Hinduism," as he had thought. So far as

he and his "confidential circle" were concerned, he frankly confessed that Ram Chandra's "lucubrations" were "giving immense amusement," but he was generous enough to promise to "forward his [Ram Chandra's] productions to the great Sanskritists of Europe," if he gave, "in his best sarcastic vein, even the slightest hint of a new idea about the Sanskrit chivalry"

Ram Chandra's third letter, "The Intellectual Superiority of Europe," appeared on the 28th October. It gave a full and detailed exposition of Bankim's views on Hinduism, and deprecated "methods of disputation which find favour only among pugnacious school boys gathered at a wedding feast"

Hastie's facile pen did not remain idle, his reply, "The Intellectual Inferiority of India," was a very long one, and came out in *The Statesman* in three instalments, on the 30th and 31st October, and on the 2nd November. He found in Ram Chandra's letter nothing but "shallow verbosity," "inconsistent farrago of phrases," "total irrelevance of reasoning" "feeble commonplace of reflection," "utter ignorance of even the rudiments of Hindu mythology and philosophy," "a strange jumble of ancient heterodoxy, mediaeval sensualism, and modern scepticism." He fancied that 'the more learned representatives of Hinduism,' would characterise Ram Chandra, about whose identity he had lately become aware, as "a romancer and not a reasoner, an Anglicist and not a Sanskritist, an apostate and not an apostle, a poetaster and not a critic."

The learned Scottish divine was evidently surprised by the total want in his opponent's letters of that complaisant acceptance of the superiority of everything Western which was a marked characteristic of the English educated Bengali of those days. He was at pains to establish the claims he had advanced on behalf of the European Sanskritists, and thus enunciated what he called "the great law that obtains between productive and reproductive thought," a law of which, according to him, Ram Chandra had "not obtained the slightest glimpse" "it is certain that no literature, nor any spontaneous outbursts of genius, is completely understood by the people among whom it arose, nor is fully appreciated until it is dead." The Europeans must also be taken to understand Hinduism better than the pundits, for in Hastie's opinion

"While the votary of any religion generally understands his own system better than he does any other, the follower of any other religion which has outgrown it, or which moves on a higher stage of thought, understands it much better than he does, and is much more competent to expound its meaning and relations."

Not satisfied with making these general statements, he descended into particulars. Entirely mistaking Bankim's attitude towards the Tantras,—a misunderstanding, as we shall see later, shared by no less a person than the Rev K M Banerjea—Hastie burst forth into this tirade, a rather interesting one, as it contained his considered opinion of what he was pleased to designate as the "Tantrika Bible"—

"To him the lascivious Tantras, which one might suppose, without any wrong to Hinduism, to have been written by a race of monkeys under the omniscient superintendence of the all-wise Hanuman, becomes the inspired Book of books, and what the wily old Brahmans out of a concession to the popular sensuality dignified as "a fifth Veda," swallows up all the rest in its disgusting maw, and becomes the bloated idol of the modern Hindu, as it is the blighting curse of his heart and of his home."

He could not quite follow Bankim's ideas about Hindu religious philosophy, and to him it was incredible how they could be grounded on the Sánkhya which, according to him, was a "ritualistic speculation of an ancient Hindu Bradlaugh," and "the most thorough-going Atheism that Hindu philosophy has known." He did not agree with Bankim about the date of the Sánkhya, which, he thought, "was not formulated in its technical terms, till long after the greatest pupil of Aristotle carried philosophy with him to India." According to him,

"There is every probability that the philosophical movement in India was largely influenced by the introduction of Greek ideas, and the Sánkhya system most of all. There seems to have been a kind of intellectual endosmose and exosmose going on between the East and the West through a very broad and porous diaphragm for centuries, which historical criticism is only beginning to explain. The Hindus received some of the first principles of their speculative thinking from the free and progressive Greeks,\* and they gave them back, steeped in the wild and gross revelling of naturalistic fancy, to the Gnostics and Neoplatonists of Alexandria."

He thus stated his considered opinion about the Hindu religion :—

"So far as the Nineteenth Century can see into it, Hinduism *has only a rotten husk and no kernel*. It is *full of Nothingness*, says Kapila, and all the rest of them, save only RAM CHANDRA. It is vain to try to put life or light or love into its "eyeless socket" again, or to attempt to cover its "rattling bones" with the semblance of new "flesh and blood." Not a breath of real spiritual life stirs in the bare shaking skeleton, and we can now look it through and through."

And accordingly, he twitted Bankim on his idea of getting Hindu idols from Europe :—

"And hence it would really be of no avail to get a brand-new set of finer looking gods manufactured in Birmingham, even if it should be arranged that

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\* Historical criticism, as represented by its latest *European* exponent, however holds just the contrary view: "The paradox of Niese to the effect that the whole subsequent development of India was dependent upon Alexander's institutions is not, I think, true in any sense, or supported by a single fact.... India was not hellenised." (V. A. Smith, *Early History of India*, 3rd ed., p. 113). Ed.

their godships should pass like piece goods through the Custom House, and that no protective tariff should limit educated Hindus in their more aesthetic worship of the sordid productions of European skill."

And, having learnt almost at the last moment, that he had had the honour of dealing with "the Sir Walter Scott of Bengal," "a foeman worthy of any steel" he reminded him, at the end of the third instalment of his letter, that the example of Sir Walter Scott himself went to "shew that the reproduction of romantic past is not the highest in literature, and still less so in religion," and that there was "a better way" where higher and more enduring laurels may be more easily won"

Bankim had said all he had to say on the subject in his letter of the 28th October, and he did not deign to reply to the above letter of Hastie nor to two other letters of other correspondents which appeared about that time. So far as he was concerned, the controversy was at an end. But, on the 14th November, there appeared in *The Statesman* a letter, "The Recent Controversy" from the pen of the Rev K M Banerjea, which dealt exhaustively with Hinduism, and the ideas of Ram Chandra, who was openly designated as "the author of *Kapal Kundala*"

There was one point, the influence of the Tantras, about which Banerjea like Hastie before him, had misunderstood Bankim. Only to remove this misconception, and not to reopen the controversy, which had already terminated, Bankim wrote his last letter, "The Recent Controversy," which appeared in *The Statesman* on the 22nd November. He did not think it necessary any longer to use his pen name, and this letter appeared over his own signature

Everything relevant to the controversy so far as Bankim's part in it is concerned has been printed in the appendix, these include some of Hastie's letters in full and extracts from one of them as well as Banerjea's important contribution. Other letters, not strictly relevant, but throwing interesting sidelights on the dispute, have been already dealt with in some detail in this preface. These, as well as the facts set out above, will, it is hoped substantially help the reader to follow this remarkable controversy which made not a little stir amongst our educated people in those days. The questions then raised and discussed went a long way towards clarifying peoples' ideas about the living faith of the Hindus, and it will be found that they are of no less interest to day, even after the lapse of sixty years.—*Ed*

[*The Statesman*, October 6, 1882.]

## THE MODERN ST. PAUL.

TO THE EDITOR.

SIR,—Will you allow me to suggest to Mr. Hastie, who is so ambitious of earning distinction as a sort of Indian St. Paul, that it is fit that he should render himself better acquainted with the doctrines of the Hindoo religion before he seeks to demolish them? As matters stand with him, his arguments are simply contemptible; and I think the columns of the *Statesman* might have been more usefully occupied by advertisements about Doorga Pooja holiday goods than by trash which renders the champion of Christianity contemptible in the eyes of idolaters. This may be harsh language, but the writer who mistakes Vedantism for Hindooism, and goes to Mr. Monier Williams for an exposition of that doctrine, hardly deserves better treatment. Mr. Hastie's attempt to storm "the inner citadel" of the Hindoo religion forcibly reminds us of another equally heroic achievement—that of the redoubted knight of La Mancha before the windmill.

Let Mr. Hastie take my advice, and obtain some knowledge of Sanskrit scriptures in the ORIGINAL. Let him study then critically all the systems of Hindoo philosophy—the *Bhagabat-Gita*, the *Bhakti Suka* of Sandilya, and such other works. Let him not study them under European scholars, for they cannot teach what they don't understand; the blind cannot lead the blind. Let him study them with a Hindoo, with one who *believes* in them. And then, if he should still entertain his present inclination to enter on an apostolic career, let him hold forth at his pleasure, and if we do not promise to be convinced by him, we promise not to laugh at him. At present, arguments would be thrown away on him. There can be no controversy on a subject when one of the controversialists is in utter ignorance on the subject-matter of the controversy; and if under such circumstances the "Olympians only yawn," and do not assert, Mr. Hastie has only to thank his own precipitate ignorance.

RAM CHANDRA.

## II

[*The Statesman*, October 16, 1882.]

## EUROPEAN VERSIONS OF HINDOO DOCTRINES

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir,—The solution of riddles and conundrums is not a legitimate subject for the columns of the *Statesman*, and if I again seek to occupy any portion of its space, it is not with a view to essay my skill in exercises which Mr. Hastie may possibly have found beyond the capacity of unpromising students in the General Assembly's Institution. The courage and dash with which Mr. Hastie throws down the gauntlet I admire and acknowledge with a low *salaam*, merely suggesting, in all humility, the necessity of further improvement in transliterating and transcribing Sanskrit texts. Contempt for dia-critical marks is no doubt right, but I am afraid that, without them, even Dr. Muir himself will not acknowledge the mutilated fragment to be Vedic verse.

But Mr. Hastie's letter of the 6th has a serious as well as a comic side. Mr. Hastie now ascends from the apostolic serenity of his former letters, to the grandeur of prophetic fury. It is no longer St. Paul addressing the benighted heathen in the language of persuasion; it is the old Hebrew prophet hurling forth anathemas against the enemies of God and of Israel. In plain language, as some irreverent heathen may be supposed to say, *Mr. Hastie loses temper*. That is an important point gained in favour of Hinduism. Mr. Hastie attacks, without any provocation, the proceedings, in a solemn mourning ceremony held in the private dwelling house of one of the most respectable Hindu families in the country, attacks all the most respected members of native society; attacks their religion; attacks the religion of the nation. And all this without the slightest provocation, and from no other motive than a somewhat overflowing zeal in the cause of truth and of religion. And then, when an humble individual of the nation whose religion he tramples upon, ventures upon a single retort, Mr. Hastie's temper is on fire and it explodes. The combatant who loses his temper in fight is rarely believed to be on the winning side. That is the point I score in favour

of Hinduism. If this is the attitude which the Christian missionary of the present day thinks it proper to assume towards Hinduism, Hinduism has nothing to fear from his labours.

But to come to the real *casus belli*, which alone is of any importance. I suggested to Mr. Hastie that before putting himself forward as the assailant of the Hindu religion, he should study the Hindu scriptures in the original, and under the guidance of native scholars who believe in them. That Mr. Hastie does not choose to accept my advice does no harm either to me or to my cause. It is no loss to the Hindu religion that its assailants do not choose to be better armed than they are. But beneath Mr. Hastie's scornful rejection of my advice, there lurk errors which are not confined to him, but are shared by a large class of Europeans, whose numbers, position and influence, and sincere good feeling for Indian populations give them an importance far superior to what can arise out of this shallow and somewhat worn-out controversy.

The first of these errors consists in the assumption that, because European Sanskritists are competent scholars, the translations from Sanskrit which they produce must necessarily teach all that the originals have to teach. A brief consideration will convince Mr. Hastie, and others who think with him, that no translation from the Sanskrit into a European language can truly or even approximately represent the original.

Let the translator be the profoundest Sanskrit scholar in the world—let the translation be the most accurate that language can make it, still the disparity between the original and the translation will be, for practical purposes, very wide. The reason is obvious. You can translate a word by a word, but behind the word there is an idea, the thing which the word denotes, and this idea you cannot translate, if it does not exist among the people in whose language you are translating. The English or the German language can possess no words or expressions to denote ideas or conceptions which have never entered into a Teutonic brain. Now, a people so thoroughly unconnected with England or Germany as the old Sanskrit-speaking people of India, and developing a civilisation and a literature peculiarly their own, had necessarily a vast store of ideas and conceptions utterly foreign to the Englishman or the German, just as the Englishman or the German boasts a still vaster number of ideas utterly foreign to the Hindu. These, which form the spirit and the matter of religious and philosophical treatises, are

entirely distorted and, as a matter of necessity, misrepresented in every translation—even in the best. And the best translations—not translations merely, but all comments and expositions in any language so widely differing as the European languages differ from the Sanskrit—must, thus, to a great extent be misleading.

And who is best qualified to expound the ideas and conceptions which cannot be translated—the foreigner who has nothing corresponding to them in the whole range of his thoughts and experiences, or the native who was nurtured in them from his infancy? If obviously the latter, what is the meaning of this towering indignation at my suggestion that Mr. Hastie should resort to the latter for instruction? I added that he should take his lessons not merely from a Brahmin, but from a Brahmin who *believed* in them. Was it so very unreasonable as to call down a protest from Mr. Hastie on behalf of the helpless, ill-treated scholars of Europe? Does Mr. Hastie believe that any department of human thought which has had its influence on a large portion of the human race, will yield any valuable results without a loving and reverential study? If Mr. Hastie thinks that he can comprehend the vast complicated labyrinth of Hindu religious belief without studying it in the original sources of knowledge, and in a spirit of patient, earnest, and reverential search after truth, he will meet with bitter disappointment. He will fail in arriving at a correct comprehension of Hinduism, as—I say it most emphatically—as *every other European who has made the attempt has failed*. And if he thinks that his eloquence alone will enable him to demolish the oldest and the most enduring of all religious systems without a correct knowledge of its doctrines—why, I can only wish for an Indian Cervantes to record his achievements.

Mr. Hastie has unnecessarily complicated the question by his protest on behalf of European Sanskritists. No one questions their *scholarship*. I can assure him that men like Max Müller and Goldstücker, Colebrooke and Muir, Weber and Roth do not stand in need of a champion like Mr. Hastie. I yield to none in my profound respect for their learning, their ability, and the large-hearted philanthropy which leads them to devote themselves to pursuits from which my countrymen often recoil in fear and despair. And I, as a native of India, would be certainly shamefully wanting in gratitude, if I did not acknowledge their great services in the dissemination of the Sanskrit language and Sanskrit learning throughout the civilised world.

When, however, Mr. Hastic goes on to say that " both the Sanskrit language and the Sanskrit literature are much better understood in Europe and America than they are in India," I decline to follow. It is, I believe, one of the most monstrous assertions ever made; but what gives it importance is that not a few Europeans, and possibly some anglicised natives—Hindus I cannot call them—who do not mix with their own race, believe it to be true. The principal ground for this belief is, I think, to be found in the circumstance that these Europeans and natives are more familiar with what European scholars have written on Indian languages and Indian literature than with the writings of native scholars. A few natives, like Dr. Rajendralala Mitra and Dr. K. M. Banerjee, write in English. Those not less estimable men, who are more anxious to address the vast mass of their own countrymen than a few European scholars, prefer writing in their own vernacular. The existence and the scholarship of those who choose to write in their own vernacular, in preference to Mr. Hastie's, remain to him and to those who think with him as things unknown. I am also willing to confess that the native scholars have written much less than Europeans, and that the intellectual culture of the mass of the readers whom they seek to instruct being inferior to that of the highly educated class whom European writers address, the scientific value of their writings is necessarily proportionately inferior. But the inference does not follow that native scholars are less at home in the language and literature of their own country than European Sanskritists.

The question is, however, hardly relevant. European scholars may be all that Mr. Hastie says that they are; no one seeks to depreciate their merits. What I said of them was—" They cannot teach what they do not understand; the blind cannot lead the blind." This of course is a mere truism on the surface, but it is not the mere truism which has induced Mr. Hastie to explode. I did mean to say that the fundamental doctrines of the Hindu religion and its vast details are what no European scholar understands and what no European scholar is competent to teach. This I did mean to say, and this I again positively assert. I will add, that there are many other things in Indian literature and Indian philosophy—other things than the religious doctrines—which no European scholar understands, and no European scholar is competent to teach. I will also assert with equal emphasis that in these cases, the native scholar is decidedly a better teacher than the European. What I assert I am prepared to maintain, and if you,

Mr Editor, will not grudge me space, and your readers their patience, I will maintain what I assert in my next letter This one is already too long

In conclusion, I regret that having to write from a part of India accessible with difficulty, I am necessarily tardy in replying I shall cheerfully respond to Mr Hastie's invitation to write under "my own honest patronymic" in my concluding letter, if Mr Hastie will insist on it That I do not do so now, proceeds merely from a desire to spare Mr Hastie the disappointment of finding himself opposed by an unworthy antagonist In the mean time, I enclose my card, in order that Mr Hastie may satisfy himself, at his pleasure, about the very humble position, but also about the genuine Brahminhood of his adversary

RAM CHANDRA

*P.S.*—The most amusing part of Mr Hastie's letter is perhaps the parenthetical interrogation, "Did he write *Suka*?" Mr Hastie, who gladly recognises it "among the pearls of Sanskrit literature," does not see his way to correcting your printer's mistake Sandilya's celebrated treatise is entitled *Bhakti Sutra*, not *Bhakti Suka*

### III

[*The Statesman*, October 28, 1882.]

## THE INTELLECTUAL SUPERIORITY OF EUROPE.

TO THE EDITOR.

SIR,—I am sorry to have again kept Mr. Hastie and his “confidential circle” waiting for the promised amusement, but a Brahman’s proper occupation during the Pujas is feasting, not controversy. Advised by Mr. Hastie that religious discussions contribute so abundantly to clerical mirth, I now hasten to treat him to a rather large measure of that commodity.

What I offered to maintain in my last letter was that the fundamental doctrines of the Hindu religion, and its vast details, are what no European scholar understands, and what no European scholar is competent to teach; that this is true not only of the doctrines of the Hindu religion, but also of much in Hindu literature and Hindu philosophy, and that in these cases the native scholar is a better teacher than the European.

Your readers may consider it somewhat superfluous that anybody should undertake to prove that those who profess a religion understand its doctrines better than those who do not profess it. I must do Mr. Hastie the justice to say that he has nowhere distinctly denied this. It is, however, really the absurd conclusion to be drawn from the position Mr. Hastie has taken up. It is the logical outcome of that monstrous claim to omniscience, which certain Europeans—an extremely limited number happily—put forward for themselves. No knowledge is to them true knowledge unless it has passed through the sieve of European criticism. All coin is false coin unless it bears the stamp of a Western mint. Existence is possible to nothing which is hid from their searching vision. Truth is not truth, but noisome error and rank falsehood, if it presumes to exist outside the pale of European cognisance. The rest of mankind are the dwellers in the thick wood, says Mr. Hastie, who see not before them, and to lend sight to whom, hosts of beneficent angels have to descend from Western skies, bearing mysterious fragments of Vedic verse on their radiant wings.

Yet nothing is a more common subject of merriment among the natives of India than the Europeans' ignorance of all that relates to India. A thousand stories in illustration are current in the bazaars, one of which will admirably serve my purpose here, and I hope your readers will tolerate it. A navvy who had strayed into the country, and felt fatigued and hungry, asked for some food from a native whom he met on the way. The native gave him a cocoanut. The hungry sailor, who had never seen a cocoanut before, bit the husk, chewed it, in spite of instructions to the contrary, and finding it perfectly inedible, flung the fruit at the head of the unhappy donor in the shape of thanks. The sailor carried away with him an opinion of Indian fruits parallel to that of Mr. Hastie and others, who merely bite at the husk of Sanskrit learning, but do not know their way to the kernel within.

Did the limits of this letter permit, I could advance a dozen reasons why, in the case of every country and every people, the natives must, as a necessary consequence of their being natives, understand their own language and their own literature better than any foreign student. Mr. Hastie would probably have no hesitation in admitting this, if the question were one between one European people and another. His refusal to do so, when the question is between Europeans and Hindus, is grounded upon the reason he has distinctly asserted, the intellectual superiority of Europe, the divine right of Mr. Hastie and his co-religionists to intellectual prerogatives which may not be questioned. I cheerfully admit the intellectual superiority of Europe. I deny, however, that the conclusion follows from the premises. I deny that intellectual superiority can enable any one to dispense with the essential conditions under which alone knowledge can be acquired, that it can enable the blind to see or the deaf to hear. Intellectual superiority may make a desperate bite at the husk, it cannot arrive at the kernel without the necessary native guidance.

In the case of religious doctrines, again, there is an additional reason why the native alone can be a competent teacher; it is, that he is a believer in them. Religious doctrines are, in the absence of that faith in them which gives them their highest value, mere dead formulæ, the lifeless carcase which may yet yield a lesson to the anatomist, but which is useless to the student of human nature.

Let us lay aside all general reasoning, and come to a circumstance

peculiar to India, which alone is of sufficient weight to decide the case in my favour. I refer to the existence, unheeded by, or unknown to, the European, of a vast mass of *traditional and unwritten knowledge in India*, used to supplement, illustrate, or explain the written literature. It is generally understood now that even before the art of writing was known in India, there was already a bulky literature which had to be handed down from teacher to pupil by word of mouth. Long before the introduction of writing, therefore, oral instruction had been systematised into an art such that writing could never entirely drive it out of the field. It could not do so because writing, though an undoubted convenience, was not by any means an easy art in the early stages of its existence; it was indeed never so in India even when it attained to its final perfection in the Deva Nagri character. Copying manuscripts was a work of time, and it may easily be conceived that only the substance of the doctrines to be taught was reduced to writing, the explanatory and illustrative portions being reserved for the easier method of oral communication. After this once grew into a system, it continued ever afterwards to be retained as the most convenient form of instruction, for the circumstances out of which it arose never changed. Knowledge in India thus came to be in part recorded in a written literature, and in part handed down as unwritten and traditional. All who have studied under the older generation of *Bhuttacharyas* of the *tols*, know, as I have the good fortune to know, that of the wealth of learning which flowed from their lips, much had no record except in the memory of the professors. This was specially the case with artistic and scientific knowledge, where another motive—professional jealousy—came into play. Each discoverer, anxious to confine to himself and his own circle the discovery at which he had arrived, never trusted it to writing, and satisfied himself with communicating it to his pupils in confidence. To this jealousy we owe that India has now utterly lost so many of her ancient arts, and so much of her ancient sciences. Medical science is a conspicuous instance; and the native physician, trained in European schools, still fails to wrest from the jealousy of the *kabiraj* treasures of knowledge which both regard as invaluable. Now all this unwritten and traditional knowledge, which is flesh and blood to the dry bones of the written literature, is wholly unavailable to the European scholar. The dry bones rattle in his hand and as he knows how to rattle them well, they make a thundering noise in the ears of the civilised world. But the breathing

form of the old learning and the old civilisation is visible to native eyes only.

I have no hesitation in admitting the decided superiority of the European enquirer in the fields of Vedic literature. To the Indian student the Vedas are dead; he pays to them the same veneration which he pays to his dead ancestors, but he does not think that he has with them any further concern. They do not represent the living religion of India, and the only interest that can be felt in them by any human being is merely the historical interest. That is all in all to the accomplished European scholar, but of little moment to the native student, who has never displayed any gifts for history. This accounts not only for the superior Vedic learning of the European, but also for the far superior value of his contributions to Indian and Aryan history. In all other departments of learning there can be no comparison between the profound but unostentatious learning of the Pundit of the *tols* with the shallow but showy acquisitions of the European professors. The rich and varied field of Indian philosophy the latter has trod but with a slight step. Into the subtle and profound Nyaya philosophy of the Bengal school, into that which formed the field on which Raghunatha, Gadadhara, Jagadisa won their great and lasting triumphs of intellect, the pride and glory of the Bengali race, he has not yet obtained a glimpse, or has obtained only the faintest glimpse. Of the great Vaishnava philosophy first formulated in that book of books—the Bhagavata Purana, and developed by a succession of brilliant thinkers, from Ramanuja to Jiva Goswami he has no adequate conception. Nothing has so largely influenced the fate of some of the Indian peoples as the Tantras, and of Tantra literature the European knows next to nothing. The secular poetry of ancient India he has studied, translated, and commented upon, but has failed to comprehend. A single hour of study of the Sakuntala by a Bengali writer, Baboo Chandra-nath Bose, is worth all that Europe has had to say on Kalidasa, not excepting even Goethe's well-known eulogy. Hindu law, the *Smriti*, is still the almost exclusive study of the Hindus themselves. The legends of the Hindu faith, which are to the European inexpressibly silly, he has hitherto honoured only with his laughter; to the loving study of the author of *Pushpanjali* (also a Bengali writer, Baboo Bhudeb Mukerjee) they have yielded results not surpassed in loftiness and splendour by anything in European literature. And I might go on with this enumeration for columns together, but this ought

to be enough. I have freely admitted European superiority where it is to be found. But their success in their special studies do not entitle the European Sanskritists to act as competent guides in departments of learning which they have not made their own.

I have been somewhat taken by surprise to find in Mr. Hastie's letter of the 16th instant, that he expects to find in this letter of mine such "explanation and defence" of Hinduism as I may be able to offer. He forgets that the issues between us exclude the larger question of the merits of Hinduism, and that in my very first letter I told him that no controversy was possible with him at present, because he did not possess the necessary qualifications.

Hinduism does not consider itself placed on its defence. In the language of lawyers, there is not yet a properly framed charge against it. And at the bar of Christianity, which itself has to maintain a hard struggle for existence in its own home, Hinduism also pleads want of jurisdiction. But I admit Mr. Hastie's right to demand an exposition of their views from those who do not accept his own. And an exposition of rational Hinduism from a native and believer will no doubt have other uses than Mr. Hastie's enlightenment. I would leave this arduous task to more competent hands than mine. Even if I made the attempt, I could not accomplish it within the compass of a single letter, already long enough, and I don't think, Mr. Editor, either that you can afford space, or that I can find time for any more. It is, however, possible to close this letter with a few observations on Hinduism from the Hindu's point of view, for the benefit of those who may be inclined to study it for themselves before resolving upon its final extinction. They will at least help to illustrate, what I have advanced on the main issues in this controversy. As with these observations I positively close my share in it, I hope you will excuse the otherwise unjustifiable length to which this letter must necessarily attain.

Hinduism, like every other fully-developed religious system, consists of, *first*, a doctrinal basis or the creed; *secondly*, a worship or rites; and *lastly*, of a code of morals more or less dependent upon the doctrinal basis. This is the whole field of study; but let it be well surveyed. The doctrinal basis will be found to consist in (1) *dogmas* formulated, explained, and illustrated in a mass of philosophical literature; and (2) legends, which form the legitimate subject of the Puranas, though these encyclopaedic productions

contain many things other than the legends. The value of the legends is inferior to that of the philosophy, in the depths of which are laid, broad and solid, the foundations of modern Hinduism. The whole of Hindu religious philosophy is probably post-Vedic, and serves to mark the era of separation between the ancient and the modern religions of India. Each modern Hindu sect has now its own system of philosophy, but the more general conclusions of philosophy are common to all; and among all the dogmas, there is one in particular which has had more influence in shaping the destinies of India than any other. Kapila had the glory of first announcing it to the world, and the philosophy of Europe and Asia has not up to this day alighted upon a discovery grander or more fundamental than the profound distinction first made by him between matter and soul—between *purusha* and *prakriti*. In the hands of the eclectics, who are the real fathers of modern Hinduism, this great conception has taken its place as the backbone of their fabric. It runs through the whole world of Hindu thought, shaping the legends, prescribing the rites, and running through even the secular literature. So long as the student of Hinduism keeps this great idea before him, he will find Hinduism a living organism which has grown, and not a collection of dead formulae lumped together by finest craft.

*Prakriti*, properly translated, is Nature. Modern science has shown what the Hindus always knew that the phenomena of nature are simply the manifestations of force. They worship, therefore, Nature as force. *Sakti*, literally and ordinarily means force or energy. As destructive energy, force is *Kali*, hideous and terrible, because destruction is hideous and terrible. As constructive energy, force is the bright and resplendent Durga. The universal soul is also worshipped, but in three distinct aspects, corresponding to the three qualities ascribed to it by Hindu philosophy. These are known in English translations as Goodness, Passion, and Darkness. I translate them as love, power, and justice. Love creates, power preserves, justice dooms. This is the Hindu [idea] of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. I cannot stop to discuss the relation of these gods to their Vedic predecessors of the same names. The new religion grew out of the old, the time-honoured names were retained, but were grouped under new ideas. The citadel had been stormed and battered down by the Buddhists and the philosophers themselves; and had to be reconstructed out of the old materials, but on new and more solid foundations. Pantheism and polytheism, philosophy and mystic-

ism, all lent a hand; and out of this bold eclecticism rose the beautiful religion which I do not believe to be of Divine origin, but which I accept as the perfection of human wisdom.

The great Duality—Nature and Soul—presides over all. Let us now see how the same great conception shapes the Legends. It will be enough to take for this purpose the legends of Krishna, because they are the most important, but I have time only for the briefest explanation. Krishna is Soul, Radha is Nature. The Sánkhya philosophy—the school to which the great conception of Nature and Soul originally belongs but which in spite of its wealth of thought, is a gloomy pessimism—had laid down that supreme human bliss consisted in the dissociation of Soul from Nature. It had pronounced their connexion illegitimate; and the legend of Radha and Krishna retains the illegitimate connexion. Nevertheless, the Hindu worships this illicit union. He worships it because, with a truer insight than is given to the morose philosopher, he has perceived that in this union of the Soul with Nature lies the source of all beauty, all truth, and all love. And this magnificent legend, the basis of the Hindu religion, of *love for all that exists*, is treated by its European critics as the grossest and most revolting story of crime ever invented by the brain of man. So much for the intellectual superiority of Europe.

I will next add an illustration to show how the same great conception runs through even the secular literature of ancient India. The Kumara Sambhava, the noblest philosophical poem to be found in any language, but, I regret to say, also one of the least understood both in India and Europe, celebrates the marriage of Nature with Soul, typified in Uma and Siva. In the hands of the great poet, the union is a legitimate one—a holy marriage. The poet could soar above both philosopher and Puranist. I regret I have not space to explain or to do justice to Kalidasa's magnificent conception; the yearning of the physical and human for the moral and the divine, and the accomplishment of their union after purification through the sacrifice of earthly desires and the discipline of the heart. In that sacrifice, and in that discipline is to be found the poet's refutation of the philosopher. The sacrifice, the destruction of Kama, is narrated in a well-known passage, which still remains the loftiest in all Indian literature, and is unrivalled by any I have come across in the poetry of any other nations.

I now pass on to the worship. Much of the Hindu ritual is mere mum-

mery, admitted to be so by even the priests, and rejected with deserved contempt by educated Hindus Mr Hastie finds out, I hope, that the Hindu Idolatry, which is generally treated by the Christian missionary as covering the whole field of Hinduism, is really a small fraction of it and comes under consideration as a subordinate part of this second division of our subject Mr Hastie will probably be startled to hear that idolatry, though a part of Hinduism, is not an essential part even of the popular worship Idol worship is permitted, is even belauded in the Hindu scriptures, but it is not enjoined as *compulsory* The daily worship of the Hindu—his Sandhya,—his Ahnika, is not idolatrous The orthodox Brahman is bound to worship Vishnu and Siva every day, but he is not bound to worship their images He may worship their images if he choose, but if he does not so choose, the worship of the Invisible is accepted as sufficient The majority of Brahmans, I believe, do not in the daily rites go beyond this worship of the Invisible and the Unrepresented A man may never have entered a temple and may yet be an orthodox Hindu

And I must ask the student of Hinduism when he comes to study Hindu Idolatry, to forget the nonsense about dolls given to children I decline to subscribe to what is simply childish, even though the authority produced is titled authority with a venerable look The true explanation consists in the ever true relations of the subjective Ideal to its objective Reality Man is by instinct a poet and an artist The passionate yearnings of the heart for the Ideal in beauty, in power, and in purity, must find an expression in the world of the Real Hence proceed all poetry and all art Exactly in the same way the ideal of the Divine in man receives a form from him, and the form an image The existence of Idols is as justifiable as that of the tragedy of Hamlet or of that of Prometheus The *religious* worship of idols is as justifiable as the *intellectual* worship of Hamlet or Prometheus The homage we owe to the ideal of the human realised in art is admiration The homage we owe to the ideal of the Divine realised in idolatry is worship

Nor must the student fall into the error of thinking that the image is ever taken to be the God The God is always believed, by every worshipper, to exist apart from the image The image is simply the visible and accessible medium through which I choose to send my homage to the throne of the Invisible and the Inaccessible Images of gods have in themselves no sanctity They are daily sold in the bazaars as toys The very images wor-

shipped are made by impure workmen, sold in the bazaars, and are treated on exactly the same footing as other shopkeeper's wares. They do not acquire any sanctity till the *prana pratistha*, i.e., till I consent to worship it. The image is holy, not because the worshipper believes it to be his god—he believes in no such thing—but because he has made a compact with his own heart *for the sake of culture and discipline* to treat it as God's image. Like other contracts, this one with the worshipper's own heart, he may terminate at his pleasure. When he terminates it, he ceases to worship the image and throws it away, as we have just thrown away by thousands the images of Durga. He could not do this if for a moment he believed it to be his God.

Our idols are hideous, say they. True, we wait for our sculptors. It is a question of art only. The Hindu pantheon has never been adequately represented in stone or clay, because India has produced no sculptors. The few good images we had have been mutilated or destroyed by the hand of Mussalman vandals. The images we worship in Bengal are, as works of art, a disgrace to the nation. Wealthy Hindus should get their Krishnas and Radhas made in Europe.

We come last of all to the ethics of the Hindu Religion. Like all other complete codes of morality, the Hindu ethical system seeks to regulate the conduct of individuals as well as the conduct of society. It is a system of ethics as well as a polity. The code of personal morality is as beautiful, if not more so, as any other in the world, not excepting the Christian; a degree of excellence which the Christian accounts for by supposing, like Mr. Hastie, that it must have been derived from Christian sources, very much after the logic of a little fellow I know, who insists that every man who drives in a carriage is his grandsire, on the ground that his grandsire drives in a carriage. The social polity is even more wonderful. It is the only system which has ever succeeded in substituting the government of Moral power in the place of that of Physical power. It is the only system which has abolished war and the military power.

If the profoundest European thinker of the nineteenth century had any acquaintance with India, he might have known that his dream of a Positive Polity and an intellectual hierarchy had, thousands of years ago, been thought out and realised with a success transcending all his anticipations.

Here, too, however, the student must distinguish between the essentials of Hinduism and its non-essential adjuncts. Much of the ethical portion is

pure ethics, and not religion. 'The social polity is also non-essential. Caste, therefore, which is the most prominent feature of that polity, is non-essential. There have been and there still are many Hindu sects who discard caste distinctions. The Chaitanyaite Vaishnavas furnish an instance in point.

Mr. Hastie may turn round upon me here and say, " You strip Hinduism of its rites, its idolatry, its caste; what do you then leave it ?—I leave the kernel without the husk.

I have done. I hope Mr. Hastie now understands how I dispose of his challenge. The modern Ram Chandra turns away from the Western Janaka's bow without touching it even with the tip of his little finger. For, alas ! the new Janaka has no Janaki to offer as the prize. Truth, the Janaki he seeks to win, must be wooed in another fashion. Methods of disputation which find favour only among pugnacious school-boys gathered at a wedding feast are as unworthy of Mr. Hastie as they are of me. But if a confession from me of inferiority to Western scholars in Vedic learning will bring any comfort to Mr. Hastie, he will see that I have already made such confession on behalf of my countrymen, and I even more readily make it on my own behalf. I make no pretension to scholarship of any kind.

I have to thank Mr. Hastie for his very kind offer to procure for my lucubrations the recognition of the great Sanskritists of Europe. I assure Mr. Hastie that he has again mistaken his man. Happy that such recognition is already the fortunate lot of certain *distinguished* countrymen of mine, whom I somewhat reluctantly spare the humiliation of being mentioned by name in this connection. I hasten to assure Mr. Hastie that I am not ambitious of honours which I do not deserve and may not pride. As my card is already at Mr. Hastie's disposal, I may presume to tell him that the approbation of a whole people has consoled me during a quarter of a century, and may console me still, for the absence of laurels which more fitly grace the heads that wear them now. If Mr. Hastie knows anything of Hinduism, he knows that the Hindu places the wreath round the full, not round the empty, vessel. I am sorry to have to say this, but Mr. Hastie's pointless jest carries an insinuation which can be met only in this way.

In conclusion, I have to thank you for allowing me the very unreasonable extent of space which I have taken up; I have also to express my deep commiseration for Mr. Hastie's bitter disappointment in finding that Ram Chandra was not the very great man from whose encounter he had expected

to add fresh lustre to his rusty arms. There is, however, nothing like hope. Let him cheer up. A louder and shriller blast at the castle-gate of Hinduism may yet procure him the honour of an encounter with even—ay, even with the windmills.

RAM CHANDRA.

## IV

[*The Statesman*, November 22, 1882.]

### THE RECENT CONTROVERSY.

TO THE EDITOR.

SIR,—I have no wish to reopen the controversy I have closed, but allow me to remove a misconception—a most painful one, as your readers will see.

Dr. K. M. Banerjee writes :—“ RAM CHANDRA tells us that nothing has so largely influenced the fate of some of the Indian peoples as the *Tantras*, and of the *Tantra* literature the European knows next to nothing. If this has any meaning, it must be that the *Tantra* with its *unwritten traditions*, is the general basis of Hinduism.”

That certainly is *not* the meaning, and I have not understood how such an interpretation has been arrived at. There may be opinions which influence the destinies of nations, without being the base of national religion. The paganism of Greece has largely moulded, in some of its aspects at least, the civilisation of modern Europe; but the paganism of ancient Greece is not the general basis of Christianity. Islamism has very greatly influenced the destinies of India, without being the general basis of Hinduism. Christianity at this day largely influences the destinies of India, yet Christianity is not the general basis of Hinduism.

What the influence of Tantrikism has been on the people of Bengal, of Assam, and of Orissa, I do not propose to discuss here. I do not say that the influence has been beneficial. I can assure Dr. Banerjee that he

cannot be more emphatic in the condemnation of Tantrikism than I am, and that I have in no respect departed from the view I put forth and illustrated in *Kapala Kundala* in regard to the morality of that form of Hinduism. True Hinduism and Tantrikism are as much opposed to each other as light and darkness, and I say with as much sincerity as he does, that let it never be assumed that Tantrikism is the general religion of the Hindus; no one, I believe, has ever thought of making such an assumption.

Let Tantrikism perish—but let it not perish unstudied. The study of the darkest errors of humanity yields lessons as valuable as that of Truth itself. And what is history, if it is not the history of human errors?

When Mr. Hastie talked of the “Tantrika Bible,” and such other nonsense, I did not consider it necessary to make a reply : he had shown himself not to be entitled to any. It is different when Dr. Banerjee misconceives my meaning. I respect him too highly to remain silent.

As it can no longer be necessary to write under an assumed name, I subscribe my own.

BANKIM CHUNDER CHATTERJEE.

November 18, 1882.

## APPENDIX

### I.

[*The Statesman*, September 23, 1882.]

### THE SUPPOSED NECESSITY OF IDOLATRY.

TO THE EDITOR.

SIR,—I shall not do the educated gentlemen, who publicly took part in this great *shradh*, the wrong of even entertaining the supposition that they are themselves really Idolaters. If they were, I would have nothing to say to them in particular, as distinguished from their other countrymen, but would pursue my work in silence, with only the practical protest of the daily patience and hope of a higher faith. But it is just because I know that they are *not* inwardly sincere or true to themselves in any of their forms of idolatrous worship, and because I believe that this practical insincerity or unreality of theirs is sucking the life-blood out of the very hope of their community, that I venture to touch however slightly, upon this delicate subject. And because I further know them to be thoroughly open, on the intellectual side at least, to a full conviction of their practical duty in any matter whatever, I confidently anticipate that they will bear with me in anything I may now say from my own point of view, since it will be said with all earnestness and out of the deepest sympathy with their common desire for what is good.

I do not pretend to be an authority on the Hindu idolatry. I am, however, aware of the ingenious and clever and even scornful argumentation that would at once be unfolded, in noisy passages of ancient rhetoric, by those 4,000 Pundits, if they were only told of my antagonism. But I am also as sure as I could be of anything, that mere verbal ingenuity can never get over the patent and practical evils of the popular superstition, which no sophistry can defend, however charity may merely bewail them for a time. I shall not attempt even to mention all the various arguments that are advanced by educated men in defence of their participating in idolatrous ceremonies; but, with your permission, I shall briefly glance at the one under which they all ultimately take shelter, and which practically covers all the rest.

It is alleged by the most plausible apologists of Hinduism that, although educated men can dispense with the idol and yet be religious, the common uneducated people cannot; and hence it would neither be safe nor wise to withdraw from them this

support of their lower spiritual life. Thus do these advocates of idolatry find a prudent and even a psychological justification for their religious expediency. Or, as it was once strikingly put by Sir Radha Kanta Deb, by far the greatest representative of the Dolha Bazaar family—'As you Europeans give dolls to your children, so do we Hindoos give these idols to our children, to our uneducated women and common people, who cannot do without them, but"—adding with an expressive smile—"we do not really worship them ourselves." This conscious yielding of such leaders to idolatry is, then, at the best, but a kindly accommodation to the popular prejudice and ignorance, and is even ultimately grounded upon the supposed necessity of their intellectual limitations.

Now, without denying that there is a great principle of charitable accommodation to the exigencies of the religious life in all circumstances, and without discussing in the meantime, the range of its proper objects, I do most emphatically assert that this is not a legitimate application of it. To every earnest mind it must be evident to begin with, that in the religious sphere every form of accommodation must be essentially pure and ultimately defensible. A doll is in every respect a proper object for a child, so long as he or she speaks as a child, understands as a child and thinks as a child, but this cannot be said of the objects of the Hindu idolatry. No delicate mind can look into a Shiva temple without a shudder. The horrid and bloody Kali, with her protruding tongue, her necklace of skulls, and her girdle of giant hands, is fitted only to excite terror and despair. The elephant headed, huge paunched Ganapati may excite the ridicule even of children, but can never draw forth their love. And to take the special example in point of the Krishna cult, what is it at the best, with all its merry music and mincing movements, but the apotheosis of sensual desire and the idolatry of merely finite life? The preliminary and indispensable condition of childlike simplicity and moral pureness does not therefore apply to the popular Hinduism, but the reverse. We never, in the highest light of reason, need become ashamed of our dolls or playthings, but may even treasure them up to our latest hours as reliques of our most innocent affections and of our purest joys. The idol on the contrary, can only become to the mature thought of its votaries, the symbol of the most unhallowed associations and of the earliest desilement of the soul.

But the fundamental position of the defender of idolatry is, that it is an *intellectual necessity* for the practical devotion of less cultivated minds. The essential nature of Deity is held to be so abstract and transcendent, that the ordinary worshipper cannot apprehend it intellectually, and hence he must have put before him some visible representation of the Divine. This is the sheet anchor of the Hindu apologist to which he binds the whole system, but it will not stand the slightest trial or strain. If this were true of the Hindu mind, nothing more degrading or humiliating could be said of it by its greatest despisers, for it would thus be shewn to be by inherent nature and not merely by accidental degeneracy, much lower than that of the lowest races and tribes. If the Christian Missions have done nothing

else, they have at least established the universal spirituality of human nature, by the practical demonstration of raising even the most debased savages in a single generation from the grossest idolatry up to the purest worship of God as "a Spirit, in spirit and in truth." And to take examples nearer at hand and on a somewhat higher stage of intellectual life, shall it be said that the high-born idealistic Bengali is of a lower order of intelligence than the Karen and the Kol, the Santhal and the Lepcha ? We know how ethereal and incorporeal were the original abstractions of the Brahmanic doctrine, and the Hindus may even appropriate the boast of the Greeks and of the Germans, that they are a people of born philosophers. The history of Hinduism itself is the most evident refutation of its own aberrations and corruptions. Even in the present day, there is probably not a votary of the traditional idolatry but dimly feels the falsity of this defence of his practice, in the frequent sense of a permanent and independent Something higher than his idol. And if objection be taken to Christian examples, although they are the most relevant of all, the fifty millions of Mohammedans in India, who have so largely preserved the intellectual austerity of their great founder, most overwhelmingly show that no idol is required even here for the most devout and concentrated worship of the Divine Personality. Let it not then be said that the Hindu is by inner nature so coarse and low, that he cannot think of God without the aid of an image manufactured by his own hands !

If these historical examples, including, as they do, the whole past history of Christendom, are thought insufficient to overthrow the philosophical theory of idolatry, I am prepared to follow the Apologist into any labyrinthine depths of psychological analysis, and to show its fundamental groundlessness in view of the constitution and activities of the human mind. It cannot be denied that a supersensuous Reason is the most essential characteristic of human intelligence, for all philosophy, Asiatic or European, begins with it as its central principle and problem. And yet, what is idolatry but a practical treason against this royal crown of our manhood, and the setting up of the sensuous Imagination, even within the Holy of holies, in its stead ? As all our spiritual dignity consists of thought or arises out of thought, the most melancholy suicide of all is that which extinguishes the light and life of the divine Reason within, and leaves the mere animated organism the sport of chemical change and decay. It would be out of place to enter here upon the subtle discussions that are still being carried on in the schools of philosophy, as to the range and limit of this inner spiritual faculty : it is enough to take our stand upon the fact that its existence is more or less admitted by all, and is asserted with no greater emphasis than in the Hindu systems. If, then, any vision of God, as the Being who transcends all sense, be possible in any degree to man, it must be attained through the inner and not through the outer eye; and according to a natural law, the more faithfully "the vision and the faculty divine" is exercised, the clearer will the views of its object become, and the more unworthy must all outward representations of the Infinite and the Eternal begin to appear. And let it not be said that this is only possible to philosophers, or to the gifted sons of poetic thought. Even the youngest

and frailest child has it in germ. There is no principle more certain in mental science than this, that all the faculties belong to all men, however different may be their degree of exercise or power. Even such a plain, commonplace thinker as Dr Reid could see in the lowest savage all the seeds of the philosopher, the orator, the moralist, and the saint, and a thousand higher names might be cited from all the annals of philosophy in support of the same great truth. However we may ultimately settle the very difficult question as to the essential limits of religious thought, it is evident to all that Thought, and not sense, must eventually be recognised as the true organ of religion. And without entering on the perplexing problems of the relation of the finite to the Infinite, and of the temporal to the Eternal in the highest processes of thought, it is equally certain that the Infinite and the Eternal, however they are to be apprehended, cannot possibly be represented in finite form by even the most perfect efforts of human art. If all the vastness and wonder of the finite universe cannot satisfy the human yearning after a spiritual conception of God, how shall a paltry image made by an unspiritual workman ever shew forth more clearly or fully His Eternal Power and Godhead? And if the images of the idolater are unnecessary according to the essential constitution of the soul, and in presence of the divine panorama of the universe, why should even the simplest of our kind be further deluded for an hour into believing otherwise, when we can by a single kindly word awaken them out of their foolish dream?

But I go even further than this, and confidently affirm that all true psychology shows the utter irrationality and the impotence of any form of idolatry, for all the proper purposes of the religious life. If ever man could construct a material image of God it would only be possible if He showed the pattern of Himself on the highest mount of inspiration. But the Hindoo idolmaker has had no such vision and does not even claim to have had it. Hence he can only draw the forms of his imagery out of himself, and his images can only at the best represent his own subjective moods of feeling or aspiration, and not the known, transcendent, divine reality. The idol is but an external reflection of the spiritual life of the idolater. As Xenophanes, a great Greek thinker, said, the idolater makes his god in his own image. He gives his feeling visible objectivity in it and it is but himself he sees in his idol and worships as his god. Strangest illusion of all—the image worshipper cowering in terror or flinging himself in a wild ecstasy of excitement before this dead obverted image of himself! What is Krishna, after all but an imaginary embodiment of the sensuous feeling of the East, by an exaggeration of a mythological fancy to the supposed dimensions of the Divine?

But by a law of reason, the illusion cannot last, and terrible is the hour of awaking from this world of shadows. The first touch of the rising sun of knowledge dispels the nightmare of the dreamers, and forthwith the illusion vanishes, never to be recalled. And these learned men who stood in apparent reverence before the image of Gopinathjee at the great *shradh*, knew it well and must have felt with inward bitterness that the faith of their youth had fled, and that they were standing there

before the last sham of the nineteenth century in Bengal. Their fate is a hard one; and will grow harder henceforth every day, if they do not yet put away their idols and feel after the living God. Mere intellectual enlightenment, wedded to idolatry, has here, as everywhere else, begotten its natural progeny of Agnosticism and Atheism and utter Scepticism. The new insight that has seen into the mere materialism and deadness of the old idol, has led by a natural reaction to a universal despair of the Divine. And so the idols remain as the playthings of the idlesse of later years, or at most as the lifeless symbols or names of *an unknown God*; and the devout worship of them by the unsophisticated crowd, is but occasionally patronised at a splendid ceremonial, with a condescending smile.

Methinks, if the great Apostle of the Gentiles, in his burning love of fallen humanity and his unwearied proclamation of divinest truth, had appeared in the palatial Rajbaree compound on Sunday morning last, his irresistible earnestness would have stilled the stir and tumult of the idolatrous crowd for an hour, and he would have poured forth again the oration which he delivered among kindred surroundings of Stoics and Epicureans and mere curious idlers in the metropolis of Greek wisdom and art, and said :

**YE MEN OF CALCUTTA,** "I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN God. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands as though He needed anything, seeing He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation, that they should seek the Lord if haply they might feel after Him and find Him, though He be not far from any one of us. For in Him we live and move and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said 'For we are also his offspring.' *Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone graven by art and man's device."*

If the learned men who on Sunday last yielded a homage unworthy of themselves to the degrading idolatry of their forefathers, will not listen to any poor words of mine, I fervently beseech them at least to meditate with open heart and soul, as they well can, upon these glorious utterances of the great Apostle of the Gentiles who bore the whole world of the idolatrous children of God so tenderly upon his heart. Every word of them might indeed have been spoken yesterday here in this Calcutta, and been written down for the first time to-day; and yet though eighteen centuries old, the world has not exhausted their length of human comprehensiveness, their breadth of affectionate charity, or their depth of philosophic wisdom. May these most interesting searchers after truth around us, like the wisest of the children of men since that unparalleled oration was delivered to the Athenians on Mars Hill,

also find their Divine light and guidance out of all the darkness and sorrows of time through this same Paul of the ancient Minor Asia, who was Divinely called to his office even for their sakes too, and whom the ages since have shewn to be the greatest of all the followers of JESUS CHRIST

W. HASTIE

The General Assembly's Institution  
September 22, 1882

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## II

[*The Statesman*, September 26, 1882 ]

### THE ALLEGED HARMLESSNESS OF IDOLATRY

TO THE EDITOR

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Let it not be said that our European scholars do not understand Hinduism. It is they who have seen all its mysteries first, in the clear modern daylight of contrasting light and shade, and who have explained its every enigma to its puzzled and petrified priests

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And when above all, we take into account the character of these innumerable divinities and their assimilative influence upon their votaries, the proof against the alleged harmlessness of the Hindu idolatry becomes too sadly overwhelming. Hinduism with all its apparent humanity is but a disguised Nature worship like the Vedic ceremonialism from which it ultimately sprang, and it is in consequence pervaded all through by the mere animal licentiousness of the natural man. Notwithstanding all that has been written about the myriotheistic idolatry of India, no pen has yet adequately depicted all the hideousness and grossness of the monstrous system. It has been well described by one who knew it as "Satan's masterpiece of ingenuity for the entanglement of souls," and as "the most stupendous fortress and citadel of ancient error and idolatry now in the world. Its foundations pierce downwards into the Stygian pool, its walls and battlements, crusted over with the hoar of untold centuries, start upwards into the clouds. It is defended by 330 millions of gods and goddesses—the personations of evil, of types and forms to be paralleled only by the spirits of Pandemonium. Within are congregated a hundred and fifty millions

of human captives, the willing victims of the most egregious 'falsities and lies' that have ever been hatched by the Prince of Darkness,—pantheisms and atheisms, rationalisms and legends, and all-devouring credulities, with fastings and ablutions, senseless mummeries, loathsome impurities, and bloody barbarous sacrifices, in number and variety vastly surpassing all that is to be found in the world besides." No Western poet, in his wildest dream, ever imagined such a "Den of error," or planted such monsters by the gates of Hell. The moral pollutions of the system cannot be decently referred to on the page of a modern newspaper. If we take the boasted literature of the so-called *holy Shastras*, in which the system is mirrored, every pure mind must turn away from it in loathing and disgust. The immoralities of the Western idolatry from Homer and Hesiod and Aristophanes and Lucian, to Ovid and Juvenal and Petronius Arbiter, are here a thousand times outdone. With much that was noble and healthy in its early stages, the Sanskrit literature, became infected by a moral leprosy which gradually spread like a corrupting disease through almost all its fibres and organs. The great Sanskrit scholars of Bengal know too well what I mean, and dare not say a word in defence of this later literature, nor even translate it into modern tongues. The hideous fancies of the Linga Purana and its associates; and the putrid mass of the Tantras are the most melancholy inheritance of Young India from the past. Only to think that this has been the principal pabulum of the spiritual life of the Hindus for about a thousand years, and the loudly boasted lore of their semi-deified priests! Need we seek elsewhere for the foul disease that has been preying upon the vitals of the national life, and reducing the people to what they are? "Shew me your gods," cried an ancient Greek apologist, "and I will shew you your men." The Hindu is just what his idol gods have made him. His own idolatry, and not foreign conquerors, has been the curse of his history. No people was ever degraded except by itself, and this is most literally so with the Hindu. As we trace the progress of the national idolatry from stage to stage, we see "Religion blushing, veil her sacred fire, and unawares Morality expire." And along with them went public spirit and private virtue, until the ancient Bharata became the easy prey of every non-idolatrous adventurer in turn. And so the heroic ages passed away, with their simple faith, their brave leaders, their virtuous ladies, and their melodious bards; and this debasing idolatry produced, according, to the painful testimony of native writers themselves, a mass of shrinking cowards, of unscrupulous deceivers, of bestial idlers, of filthy songsters, of degraded women, and of lustful men. God forbid that I should charge any of these things upon the cultivated gentlemen who took part in the great *shradh*; on the contrary, I sincerely believe they have all emancipated themselves from the blight of these influences, and in that is my hope. But I do charge publicly upon them the guilt of a thoughtless external acquiescence in the form of the system, and under whatever euphemism or metaphor or euhemerism, they may themselves take refuge, the untutored worshipper of Krishna and Durga has none, so that the chains of this accursed Belial are but riveted by such examples more firmly upon his soul, whereas a word from

them would at once break all his shackles, and enable him to rise into even a higher spiritual light and liberty than their own.

So far then from the Hindu idolatry being harmless, it has ever been, and in these progressive days of light, it still is, the one chief cause of all the demoralisation and degradation of India. It has consecrated and encouraged every conceivable form of licentiousness, falsehood, injustice, cruelty, robbery, murder. It has taught the millions every possible iniquity by the example of their gods, but has not even given them a name for the sense of moral obligation in their speech. Its sublimest spiritual states have been but the reflex of physiological conditions in disease. It has dissipated the highest intellectual capacity in the muttering of senseless incantations. Every Hindu home is still polluted with idols, and the opening senses meet their abominations at every turn. The children drink in the hideous spirit of demons with their mother's milk, and cannot learn to speak without the foulest words. Rational men wear the sign of beastly gods unabashed upon their foreheads, and have lost the modesty of manhood. The Hindu alone still disgraces the nobility of the Aryan race by a Syrian worship of idols, inflaming him with lust, under every green tree.

O Bharat Varsha, the once fair daughter of the Morning, how hast thou fallen from thy throne of pride and become the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth! Well might the Lord God say of thee, as He once did of ancient Israel, "Thou has defiled thyself in thine idols which thou hast made, therefore, have I made thee a reproach unto the heathen and a mocking to all countries."

W. HASTIE

The General Assembly's Institution,  
September 24, 1882

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### III

[*The Statesman*, September 29, 1882.]

#### THE ULTIMATE PHILOSOPHY OF BRAHMANISM

TO THE EDITOR

SIR,—Many of the educated Hindus, when it is earnestly put to them, are willing to admit the undeniable evils of the popular Idolatry. They even pity the benighted people, and sometimes cherish a faint hope that the *pashala* may yet raise them to

their own high level of approach towards that ultimate emancipation from the flesh, which has been, for so many centuries, the weird dream of the Hindu devotee. The speculative gymnosophist will even repudiate the popular idolatry as a sensuous delusion; he claims an esoteric wisdom which raises himself far above it; and if its noisy turmoil breaks in upon his calm serenity of soul, he only withdraws the farther from its transitory stir, in order to sink the deeper in dreamy indolence into the unfathomable depths of Brahm. In the spiritual warfare against Hinduism, it is, therefore, not enough to storm the outworks of the popular idolatry; its defenders must be followed up into their last retreat, in *the great metaphysical abstraction*, which they believe to be the impregnable inner citadel of the whole system. Here, indeed, we have to encounter an entirely opposite form of life and thought, as different from the vulgar sensuousness, as is the cold lifeless silence of the pole from the warm exuberant naturalism of the tropics. Hinduism is, indeed, the most comprehensive, because the most contradictory, of systems. If "variety is the life of nature," we have it here; but where is the unity that is to reduce the variety to harmony? These elect souls, so far removed in their metaphysical sublimity from "the madding crowd's ignoble strife," seem indeed to belong, as they themselves claim, to a higher race; and like certain spirits described by Milton, can only feed apart on the sweeter eloquence of the soul :

"Others apart sat on a hill retired,  
In thoughts more elevate and reasoned high  
Of Providence, Foreknowledge, Will and Fate,  
Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute.  
Of good and evil much they argued then,  
Of happiness and final misery,  
Passion, and apathy, and glory, and shame."

These are none other than the venerable surviving Rishis of Bharata-Varsha,— "Those grey spirits yearning in desire To follow knowledge, like a sinking star, Beyond the utmost bound of human thought." And with them are their more mundane pupils, the scholars of modern India, who have assiduously imbibed their ancient lore, and mingled with it the latest superficialities of Western thought. These mighty-minded "Lords of those who know," seated on the highest pinnacle of thought, descend betimes, like the Olympians of old, to look over "the crystal battlements" and down upon the ongoing of vulgar life in the sweltering plains; but their hearts know neither passion, nor hope, nor care. When their dreamy eyes catch the spectacle of white-faced men from the far West, in earnest expostulation with the idolatrous crowd,—they but faintly smile. The cry of passionate appeal for aid in the struggle to save dying men, rises to their ears, but they only yawn, being afraid even to nod assent, like Olympian Jove, lest they might shake the spheres. In serene self-complacency they even scorn the missionary as well as the crowd; and in a "Divine oblivion of low-thoughted care," dream the century's

opportunity away Not for them the burden of daily toil, nor the strenuous duty of change All is well, whispers the sentinel, in the vast of space, and the Divine only dwells in the ether of the inane !

"In the hollow Lotus-land they live and lie reclined  
 On the hills, like Gods together, careless of mankind  
 For they lie beside their nectar and the bolts are hurled  
 Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are lightly curl'd  
 Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming world  
 Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,  
 Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring deeps and fiery sands,  
 Clanging fights and flaming towns, sinking ships and praying hands,  
*But they smile*, they find a music centred in a doleful song  
 Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of wrong,  
 Like a tale of little meaning, though the words are strong,  
 Chanted from an ill used race of men that cleave the soil,  
 Sow the seed and reap the harvest with enduring toil,  
 Storing yearly little dues of wheat and rice and oil,  
 Till they perish and they suffer,—some, 'tis whisper'd, down in hell  
 Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian valleys dwell,  
 Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel "

Yea we all know it, "Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil" But alas ! the sweet complacency and ease of this slumberous idealism can no longer avail All its pretentiousness and security are gone The crystal battlements have been scaled by the daring scholars of the West, and their keen eyes have searched through every nook and corner of the beatific abode And with however feeble steps and at however great an interval, I shall venture to follow their bold and safe guidance up the giant heights, and even dare for a moment to look steadily into the placid faces of the "twice born" Himalayans And once fairly upon this highest and last retreat of the speculative Rishi, it will not be so difficult to shew, as at first sight appears, that his metaphysical system cannot answer even one of the great questions of our modern world and that the whole of the Brahmanic theology never really solved a single problem of human life or thought

Here, indeed, it would be out of place to range over these fundamental questions in detail,—or to discuss them with the special technicalities of the schools, but it may be possible to touch them at least with the finger of a living interest, and remembering in dealing with the wise, the adage *verbum sat sapienti*—a mere indication of argument may suffice

It is now an old truism to say, that the ultimate principle of the Brahmanic doctrine is Pantheism, but it is not so evident that it is a Pantheism which, instead of supporting immediately subverts the reality of the finite world Taking one

lofty bound out of the sphere of sense and all its perplexing entanglements, the Brahman thinker ascends at once to the "supersensuous reason," from which serene altitude he resolves the finite world into Nothing, as a mere *Maya* or dreamlike illusion of sense, and finds the one and sole reality of the universe in the infinite and eternal Thought which he calls '*Brahm*'. Brahmanism is thus the extremest form of negative Idealism that can be conceived; and we can only approach it by a persistent and uncompromising denial of all the reality we have ever experienced. In its negation of the world of sense, it goes far beyond Plato or Spinoza or Berkeley or Hume. Yet this is the one central principle of all the orthodox Hindu authorities, including the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Vedanta system of philosophy, and the great commentator Sankaracharya, the reviver of Brahmanism after the Buddhist ascendancy and the ablest expounder of its creed. This *Brahm* is the god of the emancipated Brahman, and to him more truly may be attributed what Scheleiermacher said so strikingly of Spinoza, that "intellectually intoxicated by the infinite god, he reduces the world to a mere allegory, and finds in it only a non-existent shadow-form of his own conscious vacancy; the Infinite is his beginning and end, the universal his only and eternal love."

Perhaps the essence of the Brahmanical philosophy cannot be expressed more simply or more accurately than has been done by Monier Williams, and as he is a favourable and an unquestionable authority on the subject, his summary will give more authority and definiteness to the view :—

"A Vedantist's creed," he says, "has the merit of extreme simplicity, being comprised in the well-known formula of three words from the *Chandogya Upanishad* (*ekam evadvitiyam*) 'one only essence without a second' (i.e., without any other); or in the following, 'Brahma exists truly, the world falsely, the soul is only Brahma, and no other'; or in the following, 'All this universe, indeed, is Brahma; from him does it proceed; into him it is dissolved; in him it breathes. So let every one adore him calmly' . . . In the *Vedanta* there is really no material world at all, as distinct from the universal soul. Hence, the doctrine of this school is called *A-dvaita*, Non-dualism. The universe exists but merely as a form of the eternal Essence. . . From other portions of the aphorisms, it appears the one universal Essence, called Brahma, is to the external world what yarn is to cloth, what milk to curds, what earth to a jar, what gold to a bracelet. This Essence is both Creator and creation, actor and act. It is itself existence, knowledge and joy; but at the same time without parts, unbounded by qualities, without action, without motion, having no consciousness such as is denoted by 'I' and 'thou,' apprehending no person or thing, nor apprehended by any, having neither beginning nor end, immutable, the only real entity. If this be true, the pure Being must be almost identical with pure Nothing, so that the two extremes of Buddhistic Nihilism and Vedantic Pantheism, far as they profess to be apart, appear in the end to meet."

Here, then, we have the great esoteric mystery of Brahmanism at last open to view, and stripped of all its excrecent multi-form shapes and modifications. It is upon this thin shadowy abstraction ultimately that the faith of the millions of India has rested for so many centuries, it is *this* which is supposed to furnish a rational justification of all her idolatry and to form the intellectual crown of the wisest of mankind. The vulgar cannot, indeed, rise to the great Brahmanic thought, and it would have once been death for them even to have tried. But it is the same Brahm which they unconsciously perceive through the forms of sense, as he plays in the phantom forms of an infinite slitting godhead before their eyes, just as they see the same light shining through all the grotesque pictures of their many sided coloured lanterns by night. In their wondering, sensuous, noisy idolism, then, they may wisely be let alone.

It is perhaps not to be wondered at, that the early Sanskrit scholars of Europe should have been taken by surprise, and even been carried away by this over awing conception. And even yet, not a few of them of praiseworthy philological industry and acuteness, but of superficial metaphysical gift and training insist on seeing in comparably more in it than there is, and spend their fluent rhetoric upon its ill timed and ill deserved praise. The modern European mind, having risen again to the high altitudes of Plato and the invigorating atmosphere of Aristotle, and having seen through all the tangled emanational confusions of Gnosticism, having communed fully with Spinoza and Kant, and traversed all the heights and breadths and depths of Fichte, Shelling and Hegel, and being sobered and steadied by the realities of recent science might surely have now passed out of its first amaze, and recognised all the emptiness and futility and unreality of the Brahmanical idea.

(1) First of all, it is obvious to remark that this negative idealism gives no satisfactory explanation of the existent world and its stable order, and consequently gives no foundation for the practical activities of life, or the objective interest of modern science. The mere evasion of "*a form of Brahm*" gives no intelligible meaning to external phenomena, or to their peculiarity of being, but only reduces them to a contradictory and unreal and fruitless negation. The marvellous universe around us, whatever it may be, is too uniform and real to be resolved into the mere phantastic self amusement of an impersonal entity, and the individuality of nature and of organic life everywhere protests against it at every turn. The modern mind with its intense passion for present reality, which is its most striking characteristic cannot therefore tolerate such a theory for an hour, and the whole of modern science, physical and historical, is its increasing practical, irresistible refutation—Or, as Professor Williams puts it—"The Vedanta theory, if pushed to its ultimate consequences must lead to the neglect of all activity, physical and intellectual, and of all self culture. If everything be God, then He and you and I must be one. Why should any efforts be made for the advancement of self or for the good of others?" In this lifeless faith then, and not merely in external climatic influences, do we find the ultimate explanation of the historical dreaminess and inaction of the Hindu

(2) Again, this theory evidently gives no moral meaning or purpose to human life. Its moral indifference to the ongoingings of sense, is its immediate ethical consequence. These are really nothing but passing illusions, and do not disturb the soul of things. The Brahman may indulge in all the pollutions of the flesh, and yet leave his Divine consciousness unsmeared. Much more then may the common people give way, with excuse, to unlimited passion; for it is their very "nature too." Hence the immorality of the popular idolatry not only receives no check, but derives its most unhallowed excuse from the ultimate principle of the system. Duty, as a Divine, controlling law of life, is unknown; and Hinduism, too, with all its severe abstract thought, but too palpably illustrates the apophthegm of a late great statesman that "every form of natural religion issues at last in the *orgy*."

(3) Brahmanism, again, manifestly leaves its votary ultimately in the melancholy and despair of "having no hope, and being without God in the world." Such a Pantheism is really at one with Materialism and Atheism, as regards the ultimate destiny of the soul. The only purpose it can assign to life is to get rid of the illusion of personality, as well as the vice of passion, and then to faint away on the last highest point of abstract thought into the *impersonal Unknowable*, as a star fades in the morning light or as a drop of water is lost in the infinite ocean. In this one sole Essence, if nowhere else, it is surely manifest that "Something and Nothing are one and the same." But this impersonal infinite is really *not God*. It has not one of His attributes, or activities, or relations. It is everything and yet nothing; it plays through the vast of space and yet is eternally quiescent; it neither knows nor wills; it is neither known nor served. Hence, the more logical thinkers of India, finding no stay or support for their thought and life in the empty Brahm, when left to themselves, have invariably wandered into Materialism, or Atheism, or utter Agnosticism. And the logical sum of the system may be given in the following graphic words of a German philosopher: "I know absolutely nothing of any existence, not even of my own. I myself know nothing and am nothing. All reality is converted into a marvellous dream, without a life to dream of and without a mind to dream,—into a dream made up only of a dream of itself. . . Perception is a dream; and thought is the dream of that dream."

(4) Hence the final result of the Brahmanic theology, as Monier Williams has hinted, is the dogmatic Nihilism of Buddha, the most logical thinker of his race. Buddhism, by its marvellous self-denial and perseverance, won and held the spiritual rule of India for several hundred years; but the blowing out of all things in the Nirvana was too outspoken and unreal a creed even for the Hindu, and a sound practical instinct expelled it from India. But, unhappily, for the history of this great people, Christianity did not come then in the hour of India's greatest need, and there was nothing to put in the place of the Buddhistic despair, but the old hollow faith, with only a more sensuous ritual, a more rigid *regime*, a more pretentious priesthood, and a more powerful drag upon the wheels of advancing time. And this India appears to-day as the natural and logical product of it all, to those who can

see into the real causes of events and the Providence which overrules the insanity of nations

Let it not then be said that we missionaries are so entirely ignorant of what Brahmanism is, or that we have come, without reason, to interfere with the hallowed destiny of a chosen people. If educated Brahmins try the task of re-creating their country upon their own old basis, they cannot but fail. They have now had time enough for the trial, and all their resources have been brought into play. Their every effort is self condemned. The success of a popular reform, according to their very aim, could only issue in a conscious extinction. Such a result would be its own completest refutation. The deeper the system is explored, the more clearly is it seen that its fundamental abstractions can hold no movement of thought or change of life, but must be given up to perpetual spiritual sterility. The system is at the negative pole of metaphysical reflection, and at the farthest possible remove from positive truth. No power on earth shall ever possibly fill it with life again. Every pulse of modern life and every step of onward movement are away from it, never to return. And as I may yet endeavour to show, a truer and profounder philosophy is demonstrating the all important fact, that it is only CHRISTIANITY with its revelation of the Divine Personality in all the fulness of His self-existent thought and eternal purpose, that can rationally take the place of the falling Brahmanism, so as to reconcile the sons of India, in a pure and blessed life, to the universe around them and to themselves.

W. HASTIE

The General Assembly's Institution

September 27, 1882

#### IV

[*The Statesman*, October 7, 1882]

#### THE MODERN RAM CHANDRA

To THE EDITOR

SIR.—I do not intend to ask space for a reply to any of the *special* criticisms of your numerous correspondents upon my letters, until they say something relevant and worthy of being dealt with. But I hope you will allow me to return my grateful thanks to the valiant hero of the modern Brahmins, RAM CHANDRA *Redivivus*, for the kind advice so bountifully tendered to me in your columns today, which I sincerely promise to put into practice, as soon as he shows that I have need of it.

Your readers, who may be better acquainted with Sanskrit literature than he seems to be, will have already judged whether I confounded Vedantism with Hinduism, or whether I did not rather most rigidly distinguish them in my discussion. I have certainly not committed the obvious blunder of ranking the "Bhagabat-gita and Bhakti Suka of Sandilya" (did he write *Suka*?) among the "systems of Hindu philosophy," although as these religious reflections are now most completely open to the European student, I gladly recognise them as the pearls of Sanskrit literature; and as I stated in some letters on Krishna a year ago, I am forced to follow the European Sanskritists who hold that their exceptional spirituality can only be explained from their having originated directly or indirectly, under a Christian influence.

But however unworthy my own views may be of consideration, I must again protest against this treatment of the great Sanskrit scholars of Europe who have brought all the riches and depths of the ancient Aryan literature within universal appropriation and enjoyment. This *dodge* of turning round the corner, when forced to an extremity by fair argument and disappearing *a posteriori* in subterranean darkness, will no longer avail the Hindu apologists. I assert, with a confidence grounded on the judgment of all competent critics, that both the Sanskrit language and the Sanskrit literature are much better understood at this moment in Europe and America than they are in India, and that native pundits, like RAM CHANDRA, are quite helpless against the logical inferences deducible from this knowledge of them. A man may live all his days in the thick of a wood and never be able to see it for the trees; whereas the adventurous traveller, who comes upon it unexpectedly, may take in its outline and bearings at a glance, may rapidly traverse it through and through, and then instruct us with a thoroughly scientific account of all its elements and growths. Such, indeed, is the relation of the native Sanskrit verbalist, with his merely mechanical memory for phrases, to the scientific European scholar whose intellectual superiority is beyond all question, and so beneficent that its claims should surely now be gratefully recognised even by the benighted successors of the ancient Rishis.

When Max Müller undertook to edit and explain the *Vedas*, the pundits of Bengal declared that the thing was *impossible*, and that even a complete copy of them could not be had for love or money. The word "impossible" does not bulk so largely in the vocabulary of the European as of the Hindu, and we know how the accomplished German scholar has fulfilled his task. But when an occasional perplexity arose, as it will with the best, it was not to the native commentator or pundit that he turned for final aid, but to European scientists of an entirely different order and tendency. Let me take one of these as a practical test of the *right* of this supercilious and self-confident RAM CHANDRA to *write* upon the *rites* of the Hindoo religion as he has done. I publicly challenge him to substantiate his allegation of the "contemptible" inferiority of "blind" European learning by giving, without its aid, an intelligible explanation of the simple Vedic verse—"Chatustrinsadvajino devabandhorvankrirasasya svadhitih sameti"—as in the ORIGINAL. I give him the

whole of the Durga Puja holidays even to discover the difficulty involved in the expression, and if he does find out so much, I will give him, and the other 4000 *Adyapaks* to boot, who were present at the great *Shradh* as many months as they like to search through all the Sanskrit literature known to them for an explanation. And if at last, they all give it up, as they did the editing of the Vedas I shall then give them the luminous convincing solution of the problem, discovered, after it had been forgotten for about 3000 years, by a European who, so far as I know, is not even acquainted with the letters in which this divinest literature of the Ram Chandras is written.

This seems a much more definite and practical method of dealing with the question of competency, than the vague vituperation of your contemptuous correspondent, and should he succeed in solving this simple Sanskrit problem and write under his own honest patronymic, I shall then supply him as a reward for his cleverness, with a few harder ones out of a plentiful fund in store—if only to keep up his happy flow of laughter, and prevent him from subsiding again into the Olympian yawn.

W HASTIE

The General Assembly's Institution,  
October 6, 1882

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V

[*The Statesman*, October 14, 1882.]

THE CHALLENGE RENEWED

TO THE EDITOR

SIR,—Although you have twice declined to insert my closing letter on the subject of the Hindu idolatry, I hope you will allow me to state, that, in accordance with the suggestion of friends in the Church of Scotland Mission, it is being printed along with the other five which have appeared in your columns, and for the insertion of which I would publicly thank you. I shall be glad to supply copies gratis to Hindu students if they will apply for them, after Tuesday, at the General Assembly's Institution, or to any others who may have been interested in this discussion, and especially to Missionaries engaged in work among the educated natives, if they would be of any use to them.

I also beg to state that I *may* reprint the other letters which have appeared in your columns on the subject, as an illustrative appendix to mine, unless the writers

inform me that they object to this being done. My only reason for doing so, is to give the other side a fair hearing.\*

I shall only add that I am waiting patiently for a reply to my last letter from the learned RAM CHANDRA and the 4,000 *Adyapaks* of the *Shradh*. I have added another challenge in my closing letter, but here I only repeat my former one, which, insignificant as it may appear, is really a challenge to all the Pundits of Bengal to show that they understand their own sacred literature, and are able to defend it at the bar of modern science. If none of them—not even “the modern RAM CHANDRA” himself—can come forward and bend this bow of a Western Janaka, let the champions of Hindu idolatry henceforth “hide their diminished heads” before the more powerful scholars of Europe, and let the last abominations of that idolatry, even in these Durga Pujah days, slink into outer darkness and shame.

I publicly repeat my challenge, and shall only say that until the close of the Durga Pujah,—when I hope my letters will have been diligently studied, “*I pause for a reply.*”

W. HASTIE.

The General Assembly's Institution.

October 13, 1882.

## VI.

[*The Statesman*, October 17, 1882.]

### RAM CHANDRA REDIVIVUS.

To THE EDITOR.

SIR,—It was not without a certain “stern joy” that I discovered the valiant RAM CHANDRA marching out this morning, with a long column, to the defence of his own ancient windmills; although I must confess that I am deeply disappointed to find that he is not the learned Shevaite priest and protagonist of local Hinduism, that I took him to be, when I singled him out as the strongest of all my assailants for a reply. If the heroic Ram has an idea, it is quite evident that he can adequately express it; and I would join my request to his that you will not “grudge” him the space required for his final lucubrations, as you did with me; since there is nothing I am more desirous to see than the most competent explanation and defence of

\* Mr. Hastie's letters and the whole correspondence on the subject were subsequently published by him, with comments, in a book entitled *Hindu Idolatry and English Enlightenment* (1882).—Ed.

Hinduism possible, and more especially as you are good enough to promise me an opportunity afterwards for review. Till then, I shall exercise all possible self denial in reserving anything I have to say upon the main issue, and I promise my respondent, who is so ambitious to shine as an "Indian Cervantes," that if he give us, in his best sarcastic vein, even the slightest hint of a new idea about the Sanskrit chivalry, I shall forward his productions to the great Sanskritists of Europe, whose grateful recognition—notwithstanding all he has said of them—will be prompt and generous, and of incomparably greater value to him than any humble tribute of mine. I only trust that he will not squint so wide of the riddle or conundrum as, with an astonishing irreverence for so orthodox a scion of "genuine Brahminhood," he designates the divine Vedic verse; and that he will not take the cuttle-fish for his model when he makes his final *salaam*.

In the meantime, I only beg you to allow me to correct him on one point, which, as being accidental to the discussion, will be more properly noticed now, and all the more that, with the characteristic logic of the special pleader, he claims to have made an initial point out of it in favour of Hinduism. The state of my temper is entirely irrelevant to the logical relations of the question, but even if it were, he can certainly claim nothing on that "score." Notwithstanding the most wanton provocation, the issues are too serious and too essentially bound up with the solemnest duty of my vocation, for me to allow any personal or private feeling to mingle with the discussion. But when the mighty Ram Chandra, like a *Deus ex machina*, in all the imposing pomp of a new *Avatar*, appeared on the scene, claiming all the wisdom of India for himself, and treating me with such contempt as would have been intolerable to "a black beetle," I deemed it quite in order to reply to him in somewhat of his own style. In my present calm mood of introspective consciousness,—and I only hope that his pulse is "beating as healthful music" as mine—I can honestly say that I have seldom been in better humour with any man, than I am at this moment with the redoubtable Ram Chandra. In my own confidential circle, be it said, his lucubrations are giving immense amusement, and, riddle or conundrum, or whatever it be, the more he writes on the subject of my challenge, the more he will amuse us. It is to myself very touching to be thus spoken to from amid the far off echoes of the Himalayas, by this living *Vanaprastha*, or it may be even a hoary *Bhukshu*, and I only hope that when my last letters reach him in his solitary retreat he will not begin to think with the worthy Sir Andrew Aguecheck, "Plague on't, an I had thought . . ." But perhaps the learned RAM CHANDRA keeps a plain Shakespeare, if not a diacritical *Veda*.

W. HASTIE

The General Assembly's Institution  
October 16, 1882

## VII.

[*The Statesman*, November 14, 1882.]

## THE RECENT CONTROVERSY.

TO THE EDITOR.

SIR,—You can easily understand that having spent a whole life on the consideration of the mutual bearing of Christianity and Hinduism on the question of the regeneration of India, I could not have read, without deep interest, the last controversy between Mr. Hastie and our distinguished and accomplished countryman, who appeared under the assumed name of RAM CHANDRA. Now that the controversy has closed, you will perhaps allow me the liberty of a few remarks on the whole subject.

Mr. Hastie, referring to the late Sobha-Bazar *Shradh*, of which you had given an interesting account, with the names of the principal guests, opened fire on such of the guests as having risen above the popular forms of Hinduism, with its idolatrous rites and ceremonies, still encouraged them by their presence. No censure appears to have been pronounced on the *bona fide* performers of the ceremonies, who believed in good faith that they were doing their duty to their deceased common ancestor.

Mr. Hastie's fire was quickly returned with much resoluteness, but the real points in dispute were as speedily ignored. The original charge was levelled against those whom Mr. Hastie took to be disbelievers in idolatry, like himself, but who, unlike himself, encouraged by their presence the celebration of what they believed to be false. I should have thought that under these circumstances there could only be two issues to be argued on—(1) whether the class just defined, was morally wrong in sanctioning and encouraging, by their presence, the performance of rites and ceremonies in which they had no faith whatever; and (2) whether the gentlemen whom Mr. Hastie had singled out by name all belonged to the condemned class.

These, the real issues of the question, were scarcely touched in the controversy that has now closed. In fact they were almost entirely forgotten in the concluding letter of RAM CHANDRA, which again, unconsciously to the writer, contained views and terms fully justifying the charge with which Mr. Hastie had commenced the controversy.

RAM CHANDRA has called the idolatrous rites and ceremonies of Hinduism its *husks*, not its *kernel*. Mr. Hastie censured those guests who might be of the same opinion as RAM CHANDRA (and their name would be *legion* according to your correspondent), with wrongly encouraging, by their presence, the *chewing* of those very *husks*, instead of their *eschewing*. Your talented correspondent has himself given a good instance, in point, of the *injuriousness* of such *chewing*. A navvy had strayed into the country, and was impelled by his hunger to ask a native for some food. A cocoanut was given him, with instructions how to take it. The foreign griff was

too hungry to listen to those instructions, and at once began to chew the husk, which no doubt materially injured his teeth and gums. Suppose the donor of the fruit had given no instructions, but on the contrary had encouraged him to go on chewing, would not the unfeeling man be held responsible for the sufferings of the poor sailor? If RAM CHANDRA's view of Hinduism be right, then, on his own theory, Mr. HASTIS could not be wrong in condemning and denouncing those persons who were inflicting serious injury, from a moral point of view, on their hosts and neighbours by encouraging *kuski-chewing*.

As to the view of Hinduism which RAM CHANDRA has propounded, I am obliged to confess to a sad feeling of disappointment. Whatever the pen of the author of "Kapala Kundala" offers to the public, is entitled to our patient attention. But what can be more startling, what more falling to our national pride, what more opposed to our early intuition, and our unwritten traditions of past ages, than the unequivocal denial of the Vedas ("which are dead!") as the authoritative basis of Hinduism. This denial flatly contradicts Mātrū and all the authors of our sacred literature, nay, pours contempt on the whole civilized world. All quarters of the globe had welcomed Max Müller's edition of the *Rig-Veda* as the reparation of India's long lost treasury of literature and of theology. The late Raja Radhakant, rigidly orthodox as he was, called the Mecha editor a second Veda restoring Avatar Pundits had complimented him by reading his name as "Mox Mull," or the root of salvation. All India has congratulated itself on the printing and publishing of her most valued sacred literature, and yet RAM CHANDRA casts the Vedas away to the moles and to the bats! But a living work which has already passed through many editions cannot now be cast away as dead! It would be like consigning a living man to the earth, and burying him alive.

It is difficult to say what your correspondent's idea of Hindu Philosophy is. He has certainly extolled the Sankhya and the Nyāya. But Kapila could not allow the creative agency of Purusha, and the Nyāya could never be so disloyal to its Atoms as to allow any place for Pralaya. The schools of philosophy could not be impressed to our new religion maker's aid unless they were mutilated by the strain of his pulls.

Without mentioning any inventor, he speaks of a "bold eclecticism" which gave rise to the beautiful religion, which, says he, "I do not believe to be of divine origin, but which I accept as the perfection of human wisdom." Such respect is due to RAM CHANDRA, but before we can receive this new system of October 1882, as an *ipse dixit*, we may be compelled to appeal to the author of Kapala Kundala, and consider what His *ipse dixit* is.

RAM CHANDRA tells us that "nothing has so largely influenced the fate of some of the Indian peoples as the Tantras, and of Tantra literature the European knows next to nothing." If this has any meaning, it must be that the Tantra with its unwritten traditions, is the general basis of the Hindu religion, and, consistently enough, he maintains that the Hindu worships the "illicit union" between Purusha

and Prakriti, retained in the "illegitimate connection of Krishna and Radha." As a reader of *Kapala Kundala*, I am amazed at such statements.

I believe that there are many Hindus who, inclining to the Vedant, and looking for the *Mukti* which it promises, have nothing to say to Prakriti, while even of those who do speak of Purusha and Prakriti, the vast majority is innocent of the worship of any "illicit union." If there be worshippers and imitators of "illicit unions," they must chiefly be in circles of Mohunts and recluse hermits, whether of the Vaishnava or Sakteya sects. Householders, men of repute in society, the better classes of the Hindu community, cannot and could not be included in such secret circles. It would be a cruel defamation of Hindu families to attribute to them beliefs in the system elaborated by RAM CHANDRA from Tantric sources. The followers of Nyaya, Vedant and Sankhya philosophies would repudiate such an abuse of the ideas of Purusha and Prakriti, and the best practical *exposé* of the "illicit union" is contained in that great Bengali romance, the *Kapala Kundala*. The great Tantric hero of that inimitable novel is Kapalic, a representative worshipper of Bhavani and Bhoiravi, as personations of Sakti or Prakriti. This man is described as an eremite far from towns and villages, adopting and fostering foundling girls, only to dishonour them when they grow up, and waylaying and decoying benighted young men, only to sacrifice them before the shrine of his goddess. *because* the Tantric cannot accomplish his worship without human flesh, and *because*, without violating the chastity of women, the Tantric cannot attain perfection. Those allegations in the *Kapala Kundala* are fully justified by passages contained in the Tantras. We sometimes come across other evidences of such nefarious practices in courts of justice, both in criminal and civil cases. A few years ago, all India was startled by reports of a case of the "Maharajas" (spiritual preceptors) in the Western Presidency. They confessed without a blush that as they were personations of Krishna, women sought with gifts of money to attain to divinity like Radha, by illicit connexion with them, and this was Tantric perfection! In our own province, the case of the Mohunt of Tarkeswar is still fresh in our memories.

To one more evidence I must draw attention. Not many years ago the late Kalidas [Kaliprasanna] Sing of sterling honesty as an author, wrote a book in Bengali, called "Hutam-pancha," in which he exposed many evils in religious sects, and, among others, the practice of the guru prasadias, which was not to let a bridegroom approach his bride, before the guru had first consecrated her by carnal knowledge!

Such is the Tantric system. It revels in luxury in forests and other recesses, away from towns and villages.

Let it never be misnamed as the general religion of the Hindus, nor let the Hindus be exhorted to adopt such a Tantric system with all its filthiness.

What, then, it may be asked is the general religion of the Hindus? I can only answer the question by the help of our past written literature, including the "*dead Vedas*." No Hinduism can be found anywhere that will correspond to every age

and epoch in the history of the Hindus. I think it has passed through four stages from the commencement, and without further preface, I will at once say a few words on its passage through those stages.

I.—The first or primitive stage of Hinduism is marked by the celebration of sacrificial rites, as figures or images of Prajapati, the Lord of the Creation, who "had offered himself a sacrifice for emancipated souls" (*Satapatha Brahmana*). The same Prajapati is elsewhere described as the Purusha, "begotten from the beginning," whom "the gods sacrificed on the sacred grass." This sacrifice, the figure of Prajapati, was a "good ferrying boat for getting over the ocean of sins" I speak of this doctrine as I find it in my living guide—the *Vedas*. From this doctrine, our primitive ancestors had obtained a prospect of futurity, with which no ideal of *metempsychosis* can vie—and they derived a comfort of which no one who does not understand how death has been vanquished, can have any notion. Witness the language of the believing sacrificer addressed to a dying father; "Proceed, proceed, my father, to that place where your faithful precursors have gone before—there, laying down your sinful body, be endued with a glorious body." Of this doctrine, then, and of its consequent practice of sacrifices—involving, as they do, the acknowledgment of a "Lord of the Creation," the father of gods and *asuras*—no Hindu can be ashamed. He may, on the contrary, take a just pride in that they contained germs, the legitimate development of which is now found in the faith of the most civilized portions of humanity.

II.—The second stage was characterized by a change from the monotheistic to the dualistic in doctrine, but the practice of sacrifices continued as before. The dualistic consisted in the acknowledgment of the Zoroastrian Ahur-Mazdu and Angro Mainus. The first was Sanskritized Asura pracheta, or Asura viswaveda, and the latter Nirrit, the two Sanskrit names bearing respectively the same meaning as the two Zend appellatives. A declension in doctrine rapidly followed. The self offering of Prajapati was forgotten, and the significance of sacrifice as a figure of Prajapati was also lost. Sacrificial rites and ceremonies, however, still continued, and with greater frequency, under innumerable forms and symbols. But the true doctrine being lost, those ceremonies degenerated into objectless and wanton acts of bloodshed, which in time led to that terrific assault of Buddhism, which, when Brahminism got its final triumph, still left strong traces, partly visible to this day. And this leads me to the third or post-Buddhic stage of Hinduism.

III.—At this stage it was that philosophy began to influence the creeds of India. The Nyaya, while it contended for Brahminical supremacy, generally adopted the grounds on which Buddhism had based its doctrine of Renunciation and Nirvan. The Nyaya did not follow the principles of Sakya Singha in his description of the world as a *maya* or *mirage*, but it proclaimed the doctrine of *Mukti* as the final consummation of Hinduism. The Sankhya, with greater Buddhistic tendency, denied the existence of an Intelligent Creator, and pointed to a final consummation not unlike that of Buddhism. The Vedanta, though decidedly an advocate for the Veda

and the dignity of the Brahminhood, yet inculcated the idea of a final absorption in Brahma, which is also called Nirvan. But the subtleties of dialectics could not satisfy the popular mind. Jaimini came forward with his Mimansa for the restoration of the old ceremonies. The end of the Vedas, he says, was *works* : "nothing could be of any avail which aimed at other ends." Although this gave to the third stage a somewhat longer lease of life, yet another stage followed eventually, of which personal religion and personal faith were the chief characteristics.

IV.—I shall not stop here to consider whether this stage was the product entirely of Hindu thought, or whether it was brought about by incidents outside India. I shall leave RAM CHANDRA to settle this point with one of the European giants of Sanskrit literature, who needed no champions, and whom he has introduced to us by name. I allude to Professor Weber. I shall only add that in this stage Krishna was invested with supreme divinity, at the head of the Pantheon, not, however, without occasional conflicts with Siva, who aspired after the same dignity. Sects or religious fraternities were established, having, for their *Ishta devata*, or peculiar object of worship, either Krishna, Siva, or Sakli. Persons who joined those sects were generally called "Bhactas," though there were many families of similar persuasions who lived as seculars and laymen. And there still remained a large residuum which, without joining any particular fraternity, continued in the performance of caste duties.

Although somewhat coloured by lapse of time and considerably affected by foreign rule, yet the same stage continues to this day. The general body of Hindus live like seculars, supporting and maintaining those to whose care the *arcana* of their faith were consigned, and themselves keeping up religious demonstrations by means of their several costly poojahs. The Bráhmin, however, is still bound to daily repetitions of the Gayatri and Sándhya, the former being a Vedic verse, and the latter a collection of Vedic passages, but neither are in any way connected with the Tantras. He is also bound to the worship of Vishnu and Siva, without any reference to Purusha or Prakriti.

It is not necessary to say more. I conclude with declaring that I perfectly agree with the Hindu gentleman who said to a European missionary at Benares : " You know we have properly no longer any religious belief : every one may believe what he likes, if he will only observe the rules of caste." (*Christlieb*, p. 51).

K. M. BANERJEE.

November 10, 1882.

## **VEDIC LITERATURE**

Reprinted from *The Calcutta University Magazine* for 1 March 1894 (pp. 41-45) and 1 April 1894 (pp. 55-60).

## I.\*

I had recently occasion to inspect, as an official Visitor, a Vedic Tol, the only one, I believe, in this city. I found there were nine students only on the rolls—so to speak, and of these two or three only were graduates of the University. This appeared to me to be very disheartening evidence of the slight interest taken by our educated young men in the Vedic studies. I do not mean to say that all educated Hindus should be Vedic scholars—practically this would be impossible, but I am strongly of opinion that all Hindus who are willing to go through a course of “Higher Training,” as we call it, ought to possess a certain amount of knowledge, even if only second-hand knowledge, of the great Vedic Literature of our country; and that at least an appreciable proportion of them ought to be competent scholars who derive their knowledge from the original sources.

I do not forget that there are great difficulties in the way of Vedic studies. In the first place, the student of the Vedas must be a good Sanskrit scholar, and, I regret to think, that good Sanskrit scholars among our educated young men are now less numerous than they used to be before the *bifurcation* of studies sanctioned by the University. In the next place, not only must the student himself be a competent Sanskrit scholar, but he must also find a competent teacher for himself. By competent teacher, I mean one who has made the Vedas his special study, and has himself been trained in that study by a competent teacher. If it is rather rare to find among my educated countrymen, a good Sanskrit scholar, it is far rarer to find a duly qualified teacher. Then there is the caste difficulty—no orthodox Vedic teacher will consent to impart Vedic knowledge to a Sudra. Lastly, the life of a Vedic scholar is, in these days, a life of poverty, unless you can add to your devotion to the Vedas the energetic pursuit of some other calling more likely to soothe the pangs of hunger.

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\* A presidential address, delivered to the Literary Section of the Society for the Higher Training of Young Men, on Friday, 9th February, 1894

These are the difficulties in your way, but let us not forget that although a knowledge of Sanskrit is more general in this country than in Europe, there are probably more Vedic scholars in Europe than in this country. True, Europeans have not to contend with the same difficulties that we have. There are no caste distinctions there to deter the low-born Sudra from his coveted learning, and in the cold regions which are the favourite haunts of the Ocean-born Lakshmi, the pangs of hunger can hardly make themselves felt under the burden of exhaustless supply of meat and beer. What, however, is more to the point is, that a race of men accustomed to solve unaided the most difficult problems of life and nature do not stand in need of teachers when any branch of knowledge has to be mastered. Most European Vedic scholars are men who have taught the Vedas to themselves. I do not mean to say that the help of such a teacher of the Vedas, as can be found among the natives of India only, would have not tended to improve the character of their Vedic knowledge. But still they are models of industry, perseverance, and energetic pursuit of knowledge, which you should keep before you when you take up in earnest such a study as Vedic Literature.

I am under the impression that the first step towards the formation of a body of Vedic scholars in this country is to create an interest in Vedic studies among the educated community. There are, no doubt, some who pursue knowledge for its own sake, but there are not many such. Many will not undertake to acquire knowledge which is not generally appreciated even by the educated; very few will undertake the trouble of communicating to others knowledge for which there is no general demand. Something, I admit, has been done of late years to create an interest in Vedic Literature, but more is needed. I have, therefore, thought proper that I should open the current year's proceedings of the literary section of this Society, by an address to you on the subject of Vedic Literature.

For, to us, it is a subject of almost vital importance. European scholars, like Professor Max Müller, have been very eloquent on the importance of the study of the Vedas, but their point of view is exclusively the European point of view, and fails to represent the vastly superior interest Vedic studies possess of us, natives of the country. The Vedas are nothing less than *the basis of our entire religious and social organization*. What the roots are to the tree, the Vedas are to our present elaborate religious system,

and to our present complex social organization. We must begin to take a serious interest in Vedic studies.

I have occasionally met with such ignorance on this subject, even among men not wholly devoid of education, that they are under the impression that the name *Veda* is given to a single treatise, or to four treatises corresponding to the four *Vedas*. I cannot more usefully employ myself this evening than by assisting such of you as may be in want of information, to form some clear ideas as to what the *Vedas* are. The word *Veda*, as you know, is derived from the root *vid*, to know. *Veda*, then, in its primary signification means knowledge. You can from this very easily infer that there was a time when the *Vedas* contained all that our forefathers cared to know, or the whole body of learning that was available to them. And, then, another inference follows, *viz.*, that the *Vedas* were not the production of a definite period, or of any single unit of time. They must have been the growth of centuries, of thousands of years, I may well say, if we take into consideration their bulk and variety. It is a significant circumstance too, that the *Vedas* themselves do not call themselves by the name. Evidently, the name *Veda* was given to the literature then existing, after it had been classified, arranged and adopted by the Aryan community as the sole subject of study. Even in post-Vedic literature the more common name for the *Vedas* was *Sruti*—that which has been heard. The name implies that the body of literature too which it was given was all the traditional learning of the period, handed down by oral teaching, from preceptor to disciple, generation after generation.

What was the unsystematic production of thousands of years required compilation, classification, and arrangement. The final classification and arrangement is attributed to Krishna Dwaipayana, surnamed Vyasa, but there is good reason to believe that he worked on the basis of previously existing compilations. The task he undertook was gigantic, and the success he achieved is unparalleled in the literary history of the world.

He is said to have adopted, to speak loosely at present, a fourfold division. These four divisions are known by the names of the Rik, the Yajush, the Saman, and the Atharvan. You must remember that this four-fold division does not imply that each is only a distinct branch or portion of the *Veda*. Each is a complete and independent *Veda* by itself. Brahmins are at liberty to follow only one of the four *Vedas*. In Bengal most

Brahman families follow only one Veda. Most of us are followers of the Saman. Those Bengali Brahmans who are known as Vaidikas by way of distinction, are generally Rig-Vedi Brahmans. In the Upper Provinces, many Brahmans follow two, three, or even all four Vedas.

What is the principle of classification on which this division was based? In inquiring into this, we may, for the present, leave out of consideration the Atharvan. The earlier post-Vedic literature very frequently refers to the Vedas as three—the *Trayi Vidya*. The Atharvan is somewhat of a heterogeneous collection, and may have been a compilation later than the other three. There is a tradition that it was compiled, not by Krishna Dwaipayana, but by a Rishi of the great race of Angira, named Atharvan. This tradition clearly indicates a later date.

Let us, therefore, take up at present the Rik, the Yajuh, and the Sama Vedas. The word Rich, which in the nominative singular is Rik, signifies a verse. Similarly Yajush signifies prose, and Saman, which in the nominative singular is Sama, signifies "that which is or should be sung." The Rig-Veda is therefore, the metrical Veda, the Yajuh the prose Veda, and the Sama Veda is the Veda of songs. But all compositions must be either verse or prose; prose cannot be sung; hence Sama Mantras are also metrical. Not only are they metrical, but are identical in most cases, if not in all cases, with the Rik verses. They appear to be a body of verses selected from the Rik, or from the same sources as the Rik, only arranged differently.

But that is not all the distinction. The Yajur Veda, though mainly prose, is not wholly so. The famous *Satarudriya* section of the Samhita is a notable exception. The fact is that the Yajur Veda prescribes the ritual to be followed in Vedic ceremonies. This is the main feature which distinguishes it from the Rik and the Sama.

The relation of the three Vedas to each other will become clearer if we call to mind what used to take place at the great Vedic sacrifices of ancient times. At the present day a single priest, or at most two, suffice for the performance of our religious ceremonies, except only in those cases in which the ceremonies still retain their Vedic character, such as the *Vrishotsarga*. But in the case of Vedic sacrifices of ancient India, sixteen priests were absolutely necessary. The sixteen were divided into four groups of four each, and were styled Hotris, Adharyus, Udgatris, and Brahmans.\* The

\* खक्ता, not खाक्तणः ॥

Adharyus were the officiating priests who performed the sacrifice according to the Yajur Mantras. The Hotris recited Rik verses, the Udgatris sang the Sama verses, and the Brahmins superintended the whole and corrected mistakes.

The Atharvan is said to be independent of the other Vedas. A sacrifice could be performed on the basis of the Atharvan alone, without recourse to the other Vedas. Its object may have been to furnish a more expeditious and less costly and elaborate ritual than the composite one to which I have just referred.

Thus, we find that the requirements of the Vedic Yajnas furnished the principle which apparently guided the classification of the Vedas into four groups. I use the word group because none of the four groups consists of a single collection or of a treatise or a number of treatises of a homogeneous character. Each Veda consists of a Mantra portion, a number of treatises known as the Brahmanas, and another set of treatises or discourses known as the Upanishads. There are also a few treatises of a voluminous character known as the Aranyakas.

The Mantra portion of each of the Veda is known as its Samhita. The Rig Veda Samhita is by far the most interesting of all. European scholars regard it as the most ancient of all, an opinion from which most native scholars will probably dissent. I do not quite understand what is intended by those who hold that this Samhita is older than the others. Is it meant that it was compiled earlier than the others? There is not a particle of evidence in support of such an assertion. The Sama Samhita is a collection made out of the same materials as the Rik, though for a different purpose, the necessity for both collections was the same, and it is reasonable to hold that both Samhitas were compiled at the same time. The case of the Yajur Veda Samhita is still stronger. In the so called hymns of the Rig Veda we find repeated references to sacrifices. Is it possible that the ritual did not exist when the sacrifices existed? and that if they did exist, they were left uncompiled when the verses for recitation and chanting at sacrifices were compiled or arranged? I think not.

I believe the prevalent opinion in Europe is that the Rik Mantras were composed—not compiled, earlier than the others. This priority of origin can hardly be asserted in regard to the Sama verses, which are generally identical with the Rik verses. Nor can it be said of the Yajur Mantras. The evidence

of language at least goes to establish that the Rik Suktas were composed, not all at the same time, but during the course of several centuries. And I have already stated my reasons for believing that side by side with them sprang up the ritualistic mantras of the Yajur Veda. European scholars do not appear to have attached any weight to the circumstance that it was the requirements of Vedic sacrifices which guided the arrangements of the Vedic compilations, whence questions of priority or posteriority have been allowed to rise. They can legitimately rise only in the case of the Atharvan.

The Rig-Veda Samhita is of superior interest, not on account of its priority over the other *Samhitas*, but on account of its variety and richness of its material, and the light it throws on the religion and civilization of the Hindus several thousands of years ago. It is a collection of poetical pieces numbering over a thousand. These poems are called *Suktas*. European scholars call them *hymns*.

The current European interpretation of these *Suktas* is that they are hymns addressed by a rude and polytheistic people to the powers of Nature, which they deified and worshipped. The best native opinion, from the days of Yaska to the present, is that there is no polytheism in the *Suktas*, and that they all celebrate the glory of One Great Father of the Universe. Yaska's words are "Owing to the greatness of the Deity, the one Soul is celebrated as if it were many. The different gods are members of the one Soul." Rig-Veda texts can be cited by hundreds which distinctly put a monotheistic interpretation on the so-called Nature-worship of the *Suktas*. In modern days this monotheistic interpretation was put forward with great energy by the famous Dayananda Saraswati, but it is asserted by many that some of his renderings are strained or far-fetched. Another school of native Vedic scholars hold that the *Suktas* admit of three different interpretations, *viz.*, one on the side of Nature-worship; a second on the *Yajna* or sacrificial side; and the third on the side of pure monotheism. Some of the specimens of this trilateral interpretation that I have come across appear to me to be strained and far-fetched also.

There is no question that a pure and lofty monotheism unmistakably characterizes a good number of the *Suktas*. European scholars surmise that the monotheistic *Suktas* are the productions of a later age. The *Suktas* that appear decidedly polytheistic are assigned to the more ancient times, when the Indian Aryans, it is believed, were a very primitive people. It

is assumed that the religion of a primitive people must, as a matter of course, have been polytheistic and that monotheistic ideas are possible only to a civilized people. It is forgotten that the comparatively rude and barbarous Jews were stern and uncompromising monotheists, while the highly civilized Greeks were polytheists. It is forgotten that at the time that the uncultured tribes of Arabia adopted the monotheism preached by their illustrious Prophet, highly civilized mediaeval India had developed a marvelously ramified system of polytheistic worship.

I have no time at present to enter into the question of the comparative priority of the several Suktas. I have only to add that no cut and dry theory will suit the immense number of poems composed by different authors during a period which may possibly be counted by tens of centuries. Authors and poets separated from each other by such immense intervals of time cannot all have composed to the same plan, or with the same object, and the same hard and fast rules of interpretation cannot, therefore, suit all.

The fact is, that these so called hymns are extremely varied and heterogeneous in their character. Some are not hymns at all. Take for instance the 95th Sukta of the tenth Mandala. It is a dialogue between a husband and his wife—the King Pururava and the celestial nymph Urvashi. The dialogue covers an allegory—but it is not a hymn at all. Take again the 34th Sukta of the same Mandala. If this is a hymn, it is a hymn addressed to the gambler's dice, and is in reality a gambler's lament, not a hymn. The 107th and 117th Suktas of the same Mandala are not hymns, but ballads in praise of liberty and charity. The 107th Sukta of the seventh Mandala is a humorous satire on the priests, who are compared to frogs. The 51st hymn of the tenth Mandala is, again, a dialogue between Agni and the other gods, and not a hymn. The 13th Sukta of the same Mandala is an address to two carts. The 3rd Sukta of the third Mandala is, again, a dialogue, not a hymn. Other hymns, again, like the great Purusha Sukta, are mere narratives, not hymns. Others again, like the celebrated 129th Sukta of the tenth Mandala, are merely lofty philosophical speculations, not hymns. Suktas which are not hymns are very numerous. Such Suktas are of the nature of ballads or lyrical poems, which in the course of time, lost their original signification and their secular character, and placed side by side with Suktas avowedly theological, acquired the same sanctity as the latter.

The question arises, if so many of the hymns were originally secular in their character, cannot the same be predicted of those Suktas which present the appearance of true hymns ? I admit that this can be honestly said of good many Suktas of the latter class. If you call to mind some instances in which English poets, with whom we are all familiar, personify and apostrophize aspects of physical nature, or some lower animal, you will find that the difference between them and these Suktas is really not so great. Take, for instance, Byron's great Apostrophe to the Ocean, or Shelley's Ode to the Skylark, or some of Collins's Odes. The difference that exists is due to the genius of the Western and the Oriental languages. The latter lend themselves more easily than the cold languages of cold climes to overflow of sentiment and extravagance of expression. If you remember this, you will find no difficulty in agreeing with me that these productions have as much right to be called Suktas as the opening hymn to the Fire in the Rig-Veda Samhita, and many others that follow.\*

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\* Byron's magnificent address to the Setting Sun in *Manfred* is an instance in point. I quote it below :—

Glorious Orb ! the idol  
Of early nature, and the vigorous race  
Of undiseased mankind, the giant sons  
Of the embrace of angels, with a sex  
More beautiful than they, which did draw down  
The erring spirits who can ne'er return.  
Most glorious orb ! that wert a worship, ere  
The mystery of thy making was reveal'd !  
Thou earliest minister of the Almighty,  
Which gladden'd, on their mountain tops, the hearts  
Of the Chaldean shepherds, till they pour'd  
Themselves in orisons ! Thou material God !  
And representative of the Unknown —  
Who chose thee for his shadow ! Thou chief star !  
Centre of many stars ! which mak'st our earth  
Endurable, and temperest the hues  
And hearts of all who walk within thy rays !  
Sire of the seasons ! Monarch of the climes,  
And those who dwell in them ! for near or far,  
Our inborn spirits have a tint of thee,  
Even as our outward aspects ;—thou dost rise,  
And shine, and set in glory. Fare thee well !

I have no hesitation in admitting that a vast number of Suktas are true hymns. But there is another question which we must try to solve before we can fully comprehend the real character. I mean the question of their authorship. The orthodox Hindu opinion is that they are अपोन्नयेय, that is, without an author, human or divine. There is, however, some authority in the Shastras for the opinion that they had a divine origin—but the general current of orthodox opinion is that they are un born, self existing, eternal and without a beginning. Still, a modified origin and authorship are conceded. It is conceded that these *Suktas*, though existing from eternity, were seen by the Rishis—seen as distinguished from composed. The word seen here is intelligible only in the sense of mental vision—for unwritten words could have no corporeal existence such as alone could be the subject of physical vision. And I can see no difference between the mental vision which results in the production of a lyric poem, and that state of mind which is denoted by the happy English word—*inspiration*. The concession is, therefore, a concession which concedes wholly the point in dispute. It amounts to nothing less than that the Suktas were the productions of the inspired Rishis.

That, however, is not all. The Suktas themselves often contain clear statements by the Rishis themselves that they are the compositions of the Rishis. Dr Muir has collected an immense number of texts to that effect in the second chapter of the third volume of the Sanskrit Texts, and I shall not here trouble you by citing any of them.

The orthodox Hindu may, therefore, safely accept the opinion that the Vedic Suktas were the productions of human authors. But this is not all. The Suktas themselves disclose, in most cases, the names of their authors. Each Sukta is prefaced by notes naming the *Devata*, the *Rishi*, and the *Viniyoga* of the Sukta. We have here nothing to do with the *Viniyoga* (use) except to strengthen the evidence in support of my previous statement that sacrificial requirements furnished the principle on which the Vedas were classified. Of the *Devata* I shall speak presently. I want to draw your attention now to the *Rishi*. The *Rishi* is the sage to whom the authorship of the Sukta is attributed. It would not be correct to say, as is often

If this address to the Sun were translated into the Vedic Sanskrit, and Vedic forms of expression, it would, to many, present the appearance of a Vedic hymn.

done, that in every case the Rishi is the author. In the 95th Sukta of the 10th Mandala—the allegorical ballad about Pururava and Urvasi, the Rishis are the royal lovers themselves. These allegorical personages could not have been the authors of the Suktas. The same remarks apply to those cases in which Indra or some such personage, real or fictitious, is both the Rishi and the Devata. Yaska's definition of a Sukta-Rishi is “ यस्तु वाक्यं स ऋषिः ”; which is equivalent to saying that the speaker is Rishi. Now, authors, poets as well as others, often put the words they wish to say into the mouths of other persons, real or fictitious. I have already shown that there are many hymns in the Rig-Veda Samhita in which this is the case. In these cases the Rishi is not the author—the author remains unknown to the present day. In the majority of cases the Rishi would seem to be also the author.

In the list of these Vedic authors, there are names which are unexpected, and even startling. There are Sudra Rishis and female Rishis, but I have not time to dwell on these points at present—nor to enumerate the great Brahman clans to whom the greater portion of the Vedas owe their origin.

I hasten to offer a few observations on the *Devatas* of the Suktas. In ordinary Sanskrit—*Devata* means a god, or the gods. In the notes prefixed to the Suktas, the word does not mean the god or gods glorified in the Sukta. I have spoken of a Sukta addressed to two carts; the carts are the *Devata* there. In that addressed to the gambler's foe—the dice, the dice are the *Devata*. There is a hymn addressed to two horses (not the Aswins); the horses are the *Devata*. There are other Suktas of the same character. In these cases the *Devata* cannot mean “ God.” The word *Devata* means, as explained by Yaska, the *subject of the Sukta*, be it Divine, human or inanimate.

I hope we now understand something about these so-called hymns. They are the productions of human authors, composed during various stages of social progress, and on any subject, lay or theological, religious or secular, among a people gifted with a strong religious instinct. Poetry had in such a case a natural leaning towards religion; and thus it happened that the vast majority of these productions assumed the form of hymns to the powers of nature. This gives them a polytheistic appearance, as we now understand Polytheism. But when we look deeper into their meaning we find that they are only the poetical garment into which the lofty Pantheism of

Vedas is decked out to catch the fancy of a highly imaginative people. They are the inspired utterances of men of genius, erroneously misconstrued by critics wanting in sympathy and breadth of view, as the utterances of a primitive people hankering after the good things of the world. The Rig-Veda Samhita should be, to every true Hindu, if not to others, an object of deep reverence and loving study. Separated as we are by countless ages from the times during which they were composed, it is only by a loving study and patient thoughtfulness that we can catch glimpses of the profound significance of these grand utterances of our glorious forefathers. In early life I stood at the foot of the Kutub Minar, wondering at the long shadow which the tall pile cast on the fields smiling in the bright morning sun. Nearly thirty years later, I find myself lost in wonder and awe at the all-enveloping shadow that the lofty heights to which the old Vedic Rishis ascended, now cast upon our vaunted modern culture. May that shadow never grow less!

Gentlemen, as yet we have gone through only a small portion of the ground we had to traverse. I have scarcely said all that I had to say about the Rig-Veda Samhita. I have said nothing as yet about the other Samhitas. The Brahmanas, Aranyakas and Upanishads remain untouched. The Vedangas and the Sutra literature also deserve some notice. But I have said as much today as your patience can stand. If I find what I have already said has interested you, I may resume the discourse at another meeting.

## II.

In my last address I said that I had more to say about the Rig-Veda Samhita than I had time to say, or you to hear, on that occasion. I propose, therefore, to begin this address with some further observations on that Samhita.

The Rig-Veda constitutes the earliest\* record of those religious ideas of which the latest, though not, perhaps, the most legitimate, development is the present Puranic Hinduism. It is, therefore, to us a question of great moment to ascertain for ourselves what those religious ideas were. I say, for ourselves, because I consider it unsafe in cases like the present to accept

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\* The Yajur-Veda and the Sama-Veda Samhita need not be taken into account for reasons stated in my last address.

unquestioned the views of foreign scholars however learned, for all their learning in regard to the past does not save them from gross ignorance about the present. This object, *viz.*, a clear comprehension of the religion of the Vedas, is what I recommend to be kept steadily in view by young men aiming at the higher training which it is the business of this society to impart. That that religion is not polytheistic, I have already said, nor is it monotheistic in the sense in which monotheism is understood in Europe. Professor Max Müller, finding himself forced to face this difficulty in characterizing it, has coined a new word—*henothiasm*, and given it that name. In my humble opinion what he calls *henothiasm* is but little removed from polytheism itself.

The Vedic Rishis appear to me to have fully grasped the idea that there was an Omnipotent and Omnipresent Author of the Universe, and that He was One and Undivided. They did not call him Iswara, or Lord, as we now do. In the Brahmanas and Upanishads, He has a loftier name—*Atman* or *Paramatman*, the great Soul, or Living Principle of the Universe. The later Vedic Philosophy, that of the Upanishads, formulated the doctrine that the Universe, though His creation, was created out of His essence, and is a part of Him. The Universe is in Him, but He is not the Universe. It was a part of Him and transformed into the changeful Universe by His Will or His *Maya*. This was a conception rarely distinctly formulated by the Vedic poets, as it was by the Vedic philosophers, but it was equally present to the mind of the poet and that of the philosopher. Now, if the Universe, if all the perceptible phenomena which constitute the Universe, are in Him, or are a part of Him, the Powers of Nature are also portions of His essence, or manifestations of His Energy. To contemplate or to glorify the Powers of Nature was to contemplate and glorify His attributes. The Infinite is not realizable to our minds in its Infinity. We can bring our mind into close contact with it only by contemplating those finite portions of Infinite Energy which we can perceive and comprehend. This is what the Vedic poets tried to do. Modern science understands that solar heat causes water to vaporise, that the aqueous vapour is accumulated and kept suspended in the atmosphere, till by cooling of the aerial temperature condensation takes place, clouds are formed, and under proper conditions, the aqueous vapour is returned to the earth in torrents of rain. But the Vedic poets know but little of the physical causes which produce rain. Allow me to say this with due

deference to those native scholars who hold that the omniscient Vedic Rishis knew all that modern science has unveiled. They knew little, I think, of the process by which rain giving clouds were formed and then dissolved into showers of rain. They knew only that He who had made all things, also gave us the rain—as is certainly the case, and they sung the praises of God the Rain giver. They gave God the Rain giver a distinct name, to distinguish His rain giving attribute from His other attributes. He was Indra. The root *Ind* signifies to rain, and the particle न् is added to signify the giver of it. Similarly the root *rud*, from which we have the word रोदन्, one in such ordinary use now, means to howl, to cry. By adding to it the same suffix, ा, we get Rudra, the god who, in the familiar language of an English poet, “rides on the whirlwind and directs the storm”, not a Storm God. When the Vedic poets glorify Agni, they glorify not the physical phenomenon known as Fire, or Flame, or Combustion, but the great Father of heat and light, whose luminous manifestation in the heavens is the solar Fire, the Electrical Fire in the mid air—and on earth, the terrestrial fire which burnt down vast forests, cooked the Rishi's food, and consumed his offerings. Fire is also the great Purifying agent, and the Vedic poets when they sing of Infinite Purity call him Agni. The offerings to the gods—or to God, are thrown into the Fire, that the great Purifier may accept it as purified through His own purifying energy.

On no other theory can we explain the circumstances the same Sun was adored under such various names and various aspects as Surya, Savita, Pusha, Vishnu, Mitra etc. It is this view that Yaska takes when he says that the “One Soul (Atman) is celebrated as many,” and it is this view only which will explain the singular circumstance that each Vedic Deity is praised as supreme God, a circumstance that has induced Professor Max Muller to coin the word *Henotheism*.

I wish to draw your attention to another matter, which I consider to be a misconception of some serious importance, and which, I am afraid, I must be irreverent enough to style the *heliomania* of European scholars. Nothing in the shape of interpretation will satisfy some of our Western professors, except the reduction of every Vedic legend, allegory, or poem to a solar myth. You must guard yourself against the seductive influences of these far fetched deductions from the undoubted truths of Comparative Philosophy. A single instance will suffice to explain what I mean. You

may remember that on the occasion of the Vedic sacrifices, the sacrificial fire was obtained by rubbing together two pieces of wood against one another; these pieces of wood were called *Arani*. Of the two one is styled a male *Arani* and the other a female, by a figure of speech a parallel to which is furnished by the language applied by mechanics to screws. In the Yajur-Veda Samhita, the male screw is named Pururavas, and the female Urvasi. The relation of the two Aranis is the subject of an allegorical Sukta (the ninety-fifth) in the tenth Mandala of the Rig-Veda,—a Sukta evidently intended to lament the decadence of Vedic Yajnas, which the poet feared would lead to the perpetual separation of the two *Aranis*. That the *Aranis* were meant is clearly shown by Urvasi's words. She bids Pururavas remember that he used to give her three embraces daily. The three embraces, evidently, refer to the three fires, *Garhapatya*, *Ahavaniya* and *Dakshinagni*. Urvasi's parting advice to Pururavas is to perform the *homa*. This Sukta, then, is clearly an allegory about the two Aranis. But hear what Professor Max Müller has to say about the Sukta. “That Pururavas is an appropriate name of a solar hero requires hardly any proof. Pururavas meant....endowed with much light; for though rava is generally used of sound, yet the root ru, which means originally to cry, is also applied to colour, in the sense of a loud or crying colour, *i.e.*, red\* (....Sanskrit ravi, sun.) Besides, Pururavas calls himself Vasishtha, which, as we know, is a name of the Sun; and if he is called *Aida*, the son of *Ida*, the same name is....[also] given to Agni, the fire.”† The Professor further explains that Urvasi stands for Ushas, or the Dawn, and thence infers that this Sukta recites a solar myth.

The force of *heliomania* could no further go. If etymology is to decide the matter, why cannot we accept the ordinary signification of the root *ru*, *viz.*, to sound, which would give us the full sounding *Arani*? For the ungreased wood, no doubt, caused a loud sound in friction. *Vasishta* is a word the etymology of which can be made to yield many significations, several of which will apply to the Arani wood. But the name *Aida* is decisive. *Ida* is a name given to the earth, as any lexicon will tell you. *Aida*—earth-born, is a name which may well be given to a bit of wood, or

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\* Ravi, I may state here, is indeed considered to be derived from the root *ru*, but *ru* signifies motion also; Ravi is he who moves (in the heavens).

† “Comparative Mythology”—*Chips from a German Workshop* (1868), ii. 104.  
Ed.

to terrestrial fire, but cannot, by any stretch of philological legerdemain, be made to apply to the sun. That so eminent a philologist as Professor Max Müller should overlook these considerations, and should also overlook the important fact that on the sun and dawn theory the three embraces cannot be explained, shows how his energetic pursuit of solar allegories into every nook and corner of ancient mythology vitiates his conclusions.

I have dwelt on this comparatively unimportant matter for a special reason. I do not come here to pose as a teacher of the Vedas;—my attainments certainly do not entitle me to that office. But as the President of the Literary Section of your Society, I have another duty to perform. I owe it to you that I should point out for your benefit, so far as I am able, the dangers which beset the educated student. One of the dangers against which I must warn the student of Vedic Literature is the tendency to accept unquestioned the dicta of foreign orientalists. Let us give them the honour which is unquestionably their due, but let us also exercise our judgment as to what is true or false. The study of no literature—however patient the study and however valuable the literature,—is of any worth, unless you bring to that study a critical spirit. Approach the Vedas in the spirit of reverence due to them from a Hindu, but study them in the spirit of a respectful and appreciative critic. If they are a Divine revelation, you can convince yourselves that they are such only by a thoroughly critical and appreciative study. If a great Pandit should tell you that the Vedas are eternal, do not believe him unless you can find reasonable evidence in the Vedas themselves of their eternal existence; and if Professor Max Müller should tell you that the Vedic mythology is nothing but a series of Solar myths, never believe him unless you find, according to your own lights, that that is the only rational explanation which it admits of. Never surrender your judgment to authority in matters like these.

The writings of no European orientalist are more popular among the natives of India than those of Professor Max Müller; and that they are deservedly popular is unquestionable. His errors are, therefore, the more dangerous to us; and the most notable of his errors is what I have called his heliomania. By all means accept what help you can from his writings and those of other foreign orientalist, but examine their conclusions by your own lights before you accept them. Treat great native Vedic scholars, from Sayanacharjya down to Dayananda Saraswati and Satyabrat Samas-

rami, in the same spirit. Think for yourself, even though your independence of judgment should lead you to occasional error. Prefer thoughtfulness even when it leads to error, to intellectual imbecility.

I have been obliged to devote so much of the limited time at our disposal to a consideration of the Rig-Veda Samhita, that I have scarcely any left for the other Samhitas. I do not regret it, as the Rig-Veda Samhita is not only the most important of the Samhitas, but it is, in a great measure, typical of the rest. I prefer to devote the little time left us this evening to a brief survey of the vast field of Vedic Literature.

And, first of all, let me offer a few observations about the Vedic Sakhas. Not only are there the four Vedas, but also different recensions of each Veda. I told you in my last address, that the Vedas were originally handed down by oral teaching for many generations. Now, many of you are, no doubt, aware how largely unwritten texts are liable to variations and interpolations. Even written literature, when not printed, is not free from the dangers which arise from the ignorance and carelessness of copyists and the mischievous interference of interpolators. Even in the case of a comparatively modern Sanskrit poem like the Meghaduta—a short poem of about a hundred slokas, it is difficult to say at the present day how many slokas it originally consisted of. It may be amusing to you to know that in the same year, only the past year, Pandit Hrisikesha Sastri published an edition of this poem, and Mr. Barada Charan Mitra a translation. Pandit Hrisikesha's edition consists of only ninety-four slokas, while Mr. Mitra has translated one hundred and eighteen. Yet both are highly educated Sanskrit scholars to my knowledge. No one will dispute that the Meghaduta belongs to the age of written literature, and if this has been the fate of a short poem by the greatest of Indian poets, and composed, probably, about fourteen hundred years ago, and unquestionably belonging to the age of written literature, what may not have happened to the great unwritten literature of those far more ancient times into the obscurity of which the light of history seeks in vain to penetrate? Take the case of the work which next to the Vedas, exercises the greatest influence on the Hindus, and is regarded by them with the greatest reverence,—I mean the Mahabharata. In the Anukramnika prefixed to that vast collection it is stated that Vyasa's original work—excluding the episodes, consisted of twenty-four thousand slokas. Making the very reasonable assumption that the episodes cannot have exceeded in bulk

half of the principal portion, we may safely put down the number of slokas in the original *Mahabharata* somewhere at thirty-six thousand, that is, seventy-two thousand verses. Even this is a figure more suited to the literary annals of some intellectual Brobdignag than those of the ordinary human race. But the modern *Mahabharata* is found to contain not less than one hundred and six thousand slokas, or two hundred and twelve thousand verses, that is, about thrice the quantity of matter in the original work !

We may be certain that the unwritten Vedic Samhitas suffered a good deal in this way, and in very early times variations and accretions took place which gave rise to the different recensions known as the *Sakhas*. The danger appears to have been guarded against on an early day. Even in the time of Saunaka, the great sage to whom among others the *Mahabharata*, as we have it now, was recited in the forest of Naimisha, the number of words, nay even letters in the Rig-Veda Samhita, had been counted and it is noted in the *Anukramanika*—the number of words was 153,826 and the number of letters 432,000.

That, however, was not all. The enumeration and registration of words and letters may serve to prevent interpolations, but not variations. To prevent alterations and variations the Pada-Patha and the Krama-Patha were devised. The Pada-Patha consisted in reading the text without the Sandhi combinations, so that each word was pronounced by itself, divested of its combination with that which preceded, or that which followed it. Thus “अश्मौले” is in the Pada text, “अश्मू द्वैले,” “देवमृहिङ्” is “देवम् अहिङ्,” and so on. The *Krama Patha* is of two kinds—the *Varna Krama* and the *Pada Krama*. The first verse in the Rig-Veda Samhita read according to *Pada Krama* is, “अश्मू द्वैले—द्वैले पुरोहितः—पुरोहितः देवम्—देवम् अहिङ्.” The *Varnakrama Patha* is अश्मि श्लोमौ शौले लेपु—and so on. There are other devices also; such as the *Jata Patha*, and the *Gnana Patha*, but these also follow in the same line.

Now, we may well believe that these precautions against interpolations and variations were not taken till a considerable amount of mischief had already been done. It is quite possible that other causes—such as the caprice, or the intellectual convictions of particular teachers—led to the multiplication of *Sakhas*, which were at one time so numerous that one is tempted to believe that there is some exaggeration in the statements handed down to posterity. The *Muktikopanishad* states that the Rig-Veda had

twenty-one Sakhas, the Sama Veda had one hundred and nine, the Atharvan fifty, and the Yajur Veda not less than one thousand. If such a vast number of Sakhas ever existed, which I doubt very much, most of them would appear to have been lost at an early period. No doubt the law of the survival of the fittest operated here, as it does elsewhere, and only the most approved Sakhas have lived down to the present day. The names of only thirteen Sakhas of the Sama Veda have been handed down to posterity, and even of these eleven have disappeared. The Kauthumi, followed in Upper India, and the Ranayani, followed in the South, alone survive. The thousand Sakhas of the Yajur Veda have now dwindled down to twenty-three, but the Yajur Veda has had a history in this respect more remarkable than the other Vedas. While there was,—in the case of the other Vedas, only variation, here there was a Reformation. Yajnavalkya was the Reformer. There are in fact two Yajur Vedas, the Black and the White, the unreformed and the reformed, each with a number of Sakhas indicating variations subsequent even to Yajnavalkya's reformation. To explain the schism, which led to the reformation, a legend has been invented about some Tittiris (little birds, from whom the Black Yajur Veda is also called the Taittiriya Samhita) and the Sun assuming the form of a horse (*Vajin*, from which the White Yajur Veda is called also the *Vajasaneyi*\* Samhita). The legend will not bear repetition, but it indicates a schism between Vaisampayana, the teacher of the Black Yajur Veda and his disciple Yajnavalkya. The disciple dissented from the principles of his teacher.

One of the results of Yajnavalkya's reformation was that the explanatory or supplemental matter was separated from the *mantras* and collected into a separate compilation. Such is the origin of the famous *Satapatha Brahmana*. But Yajnavalkya's reformation did not of course succeed in putting an end to the variations in reading and teaching which had led to the formation of Sakhas. The Black Yajur Veda has still not less than six and the White Yajur Veda has still not less than seventeen sakhas. Of these the Madhyandini Sakha is the one now mostly followed in these provinces. I may give you a sketch of its contents hereafter.

The lesson I beg you to learn from the few observations which I have.

\* It is also said that Yajnavalkya was surnamed *Vajasaney*, whence the Samhita is called *Vajasaneyi*.

offered in regard to variations in unwritten literature is the necessity of carefully examining every text that invites your attention on account of its importance. A single illustration may suffice to convince you. There is a Rik in the eighteenth Sukta of the tenth Mandala of the Rig Veda Samhita which runs thus—“*आरोहत् अनयः योनिश्च*” This was varied, probably inadvertently, and not through the unscrupulous malice of the priesthood, as a foreign critic most uncharitably assumes, and was found in comparatively modern times to run as follows, ‘*आरोहत् अनयः योनिश्चः*’, and this slight variation from अनयः into अनिश्चः led to a disastrous consequence,—the Rik was laid hold of as sanctioning the burning of widows on their husband's funeral pyre. This is only a single instance of the danger to which an uncritical study of the ancient texts has led to, and may still lead to.

Unwritten literatures have probably existed in other countries also, but in point of vastness and importance the unwritten literature of no other country can bear any comparison with that of India. The late invention of writing, the unwillingness to substitute written instruction for the old traditional oral teaching, and the intense literary activity of Ancient India, have, no doubt, contributed to render the unwritten literature of this country so voluminous. That literature, whether Vedic or Post Vedic, would be utterly useless to the student, whether for religious or historical or literary purposes, if he did not bring to his study a critical spirit, and if in his veneration for what is undoubtedly ancient, he forgot to distinguish between the genuine and the adulterated article, to separate the wheat from the chaff. I must also add the warning, however, that it is possible to carry this critical spirit too far, and end by questioning the genuineness and antiquity of every thing belonging to Ancient India. Our Western teachers, very often, I am sorry to say, err in this direction, but I beg you to remember that what is excusable in a Weber or a Whitney, as the result of prejudices which critics of a foreign race, unacquainted with the country, can never wholly set aside would be unpardonable in a Hindu. While therefore you have to guard, on the one hand against a blind acceptance so common among our orthodox learned men, of every text you meet with as the genuine production of the ancient sages, and every interpretation of the texts that has been handed down from preceptor to disciple for generation and generation, as the correct interpretation, you have also to protect yourself on the other hand, from the equally unreasoning assumption that falsehood or fraud underlies every

text in the Sastras which does not fit into your prejudices. On this subject I cannot do better than quote the words of Professor Goldstücker, himself one of the most distinguished of European orientalists, and one of the very few among them who were or are capable of entertaining broad views on the Indian Literature and History. "If the creed of an individual," says that great scholar, "is founded on texts held sacred and authoritative, it is a national creed. No nation can surrender it without laying the axe to its own root. For religion based on texts embodies the whole history of the nation which professes it. It is the shortest abbreviation of all that ennobles the national mind, is most clear to its memory and most essential to its life."\*

Therefore, I say, do not lose your reverence for the past; it is on the past that you must plant your foot firmly, if you wish to mount high in the future. You are not a race of savages who have no past to remember; you cannot dissever yourselves in a day from the associations and influences of a past which extends over at least five hundred centuries :—You cannot annihilate in a day a past national existence which has survived the annihilation of hundreds of empires, of hundred systems of religion, and which has surveyed unconcerned the downfall and ruin of many kindred civilizations. I have to make my warning so emphatic because the general tendency of European scholars, who have so great an influence over you, is to decry your past history, to call for its virtual erasure from your memory, and to lead you in the direction opposite to that for which Professor Goldstücker has pleaded so eloquently. Allow me to quote as an illustration a passage from Professor Max Müller's writings. Referring to the variation in the text आरोहन्ते जनयः योनिमग्ने, to which I have just had occasion to call your attention, the Professor writes, "This is perhaps the most flagrant instance of what can be done by an unscrupulous priesthood. Here have thousands and thousands of lives been sacrificed, and a fanatical rebellion threatened on the authority of a passage which was mangled, mistranslated, and misapplied."†

There never has been a stronger censure passed on the Brahmans of India. If it is deserved, the sooner we Brahmans disavow our caste, the better for us. The sooner the other Hindus cast off the Brahman's yoke—for still Brahmanical ordinances rule India—the better for them. The

\* *Literary Remains*, Vol. II, p. 41.

† Max Müller's *Selected Essays*, (1881) Vol. I, p. 335.

sooner we disengage ourselves with that great past in which the Brahmans are the most prominent figure, the better for us all. But is the censure deserved? It never struck the Professor that the slight change from अश्वे into अश्वः might have proceeded from the thousand and one accidents which vary the reading in unwritten literature, and even in written literature. It never struck the Professor that it was rather too much to attribute this ferocious blood thirstiness to that priesthood, who of all mankind are the most tender towards human life, and who treat even animal life with a tenderness which other races fail to display towards their fellow men. It never struck him that the charge of thirsting for feminine blood cannot be brought with good grace against men who were the only legislators, or interpreters of the law, who have ever treated the taking of a woman's life as crime more heinous than ordinary homicide. As a Brahman, as an humble member of the caste, thus vituperated, as a descendant however unworthy, of that great priesthood who formed the noblest intellectual aristocracy that the world has ever seen, I may be pardoned if I venture to call on the great German scholar to count up the victims of the Inquisition, add to them the slaughtered thousands of St Bartholomew's day and the Sicilian Vespers, and then add again the untold millions who fell in the crusades, and then lay his hand upon his heart and say, if he cannot recollect instances of priestly unscrupulousness more flagrant than he can lay at the door of the Brahmans of India.

And now let us resume our survey of the Vedic Literature, in connection with which, let me here acknowledge most cordially, that no man has laid us under a greater debt of gratitude for his services in its cause than Professor Max Muller himself.

After the Samhitas, come the Brahmanas. You can well conceive that in the course of time the meaning of the Suktas of the Vedic Samhitas should come to be less intelligible to the Vedic student than they used to be to those who were nearer in point of time to the ages in which they were composed. I doubt whether the hymns even when composed were so composed as to readily disclose their meaning. In an age in which the bent of the national mind was to see in the vast forces of nature evidence of the Might of the great Architect of all, to view and contemplate each of these forces separately as manifestations of His energy, to personify and adore it, the language of the adorers necessarily assumed a form in which an exterior veil of physiologiatry had to be penetrated before the listener could obtain

a glimpse of the great Formless and Invisible Shadow of Glory within. The deeper signification of the Suklas became more and more obscure in the course of time, while side by side with this obscuration of the spiritual significance, the formal and ritualistic worship received enormous development. These causes gave rise to the Brahmanas, treatises intended to explain the Mantra portion, to indicate the uses of the Mantras, and to give fuller details about the ritual. Such portions of the Brahmanas as used to be recited in the forests went by the name of *Aranyaka*. And such portions of the Brahmanas or Aranyakas as treated of the nature and attributes of God are known as Upanishads.

The Rig-Veda has two Brahmanas, the Sankkayana or Kaushitaki, taught by the Rishi Kaushitaka, and the Aitareya. The Tandya Brahmana is the Sama Veda Brahmana. According to the authority of Pandit Satyabratā Samasrami, the Sama Veda Brahmana is divided into forty sections, the first twenty-five of which are called the *Tandya*, or *Panchavimsa* Brahmana; the five sections which follow are called the *Sadvimsa* Brahmana; the 31st and 32nd are entitled the *Mantra* Brahmana, and the last eight form the Chhandogya Upanishad.

The Black Yajur Veda, also known as the Taittiriya Samhita, and containing as already suggested, matter properly belonging to a Brahmana, has also an independent Brahmana known as the Taittiriya. I have already referred to the Satapatha Brahmana which belongs to the White Yajur Veda. The Brahmana of the Atharva Veda is the Gopatha.

The Upanishads form the most interesting portion of the Vedic Literature. They are very numerous, and many of them are comprised within the Brahmanas. Yet it is beyond question that the age of the Upanishads is later than that of the ritualistic portions of Brahmanas. The Upanishads represent the final portion of the Vedic Literature, and is therefore often called the Vedanta. I have already explained how the elevated monotheism of the Samhitas became lost to later generations in the hard crust of Nature-Worship under which it was imbedded, and how erroneous interpretations of the Samhitas led to an inordinate development of the Vedic ritual. Formal religion usurped the place of the religion of the heart. Among a people in whom the spirit of progress was dead, such a state of things would have led to the stagnation of all thought, and to national degradation and decay. But the intellectual energy of the early Aryans of India was not yet dead.

The best and most cultivated intellects rose in rebellion against the grinding tyranny of formal Vaidikism. There was more than one systematic and organized rebellion. The one most prominently recognized in modern History is the Buddhist movement. Another was headed by those who preached the doctrine that *Bhakti* was superior to *Karma* as a means of salvation. But the earliest and most efficacious of these revolts against ritualism was the rise of the Philosophy of the Upanishads. This was a revolt from within, not from without like Buddhism and *Bhaktivadā*, and therefore the philosophical literature of the Upanishads was easily absorbed into the then existing Vedic Literature as a portion of itself. It respected ritualism, while it sought to interpret the Vedic doctrine of the all informing Paramitmi or Great Soul of the Universe. It forms the connecting link between the polymorphous monotheism of the Samhitas, and the polytheistic monotheism of the Puranas. Some of you feel inclined to laugh at the phrase "Polytheistic monotheism," and it has certainly the appearance of a paradox, but such attention as I have been able to give to the Puranas, has convinced me that the Puranic religion is in reality a monotheism, and that the Puranas never lose sight of the great central idea in Religion that there is only one God, and that the hundreds of objects of worship whose merits they celebrate are only anthropomorphic representations of His various attributes.

The Upanishads are, as I have said, very numerous. The *Muktika panīhad* enumerates by name one hundred and eight as superior to the rest.

The total number must have been vastly larger. Not less than two hundred Upanishads belong, or belonged, to the Atharva Veda alone. I say "belonged," because a large number of Upanishads are now lost. The Upanishads of the Atharvan are believed to be comparatively modern productions. The celebrity which the Upanishads acquired, and the very small size of them must have encouraged their unlimited manufacture down even to the post Vedic times. The *Muktika* itself is apparently a rather modern production, so must also be the *Ramatapani* and *Gopalatapani* mentioned by it, which latter mentions the Gopis of Vrindavana, and cannot therefore be older than the Vishnu Purana. Nay, Pandit Satyabrata Simasrami mentions even an Allopanishad, or the Upanishad of Allah the shameless production of some sycophant of the Mussalman rulers of India.

Nevertheless a large number of Upanishads must be of very ancient date—integral portions of the Vedic Brahmana treatises. The Upanishads like the Brahmanas, are classed under the different Vedas. The Muktika gives a list of ten Upanishads which are considered as superior to the rest, or as the best of the hundred and eight already referred to. There are the Isa, Kene, Katha, Prasna, Mundaka, Mandukya, Taittiriya, Aitareya, Chhandogya and the Vrihadaranyaka. There is no doubt that two more, *viz.*, the Kaushitaki, and the Swetasvatara are also very ancient and as philosophical treatises, of equal merit with the ten above named. It is of these twelve that we possess commentaries by Sankara, and it is to the authority of these twelve that he repeatedly refers in his Commentary on the Vedanta Sutra.

The Kaushitaki and the Aitareya belong to the Rig-Veda, and are portions of the Brahmanas of the same name. The Chhandogya and Kena belong to the Sama Veda. The Chhandogya, as already stated, is a continuation of the Tandya Brahmana. The Kena is also known as the Talabakara. The Taittiriya, the Katha and the Swetasvatara Upanishads belong to the Black Yajur Veda, and the Isa Upanishad and the Vrihadaranyaka belong to the White Yajur Veda. Of these, the Taittiriya Upanishad is a part of the Taittiriya Aranyaka. The Isa Upanishad forms a part of the White Yajur Veda Samhita itself. The Vrihadaranyaka is a portion of the Satapatha Brahmana. The Mundaka, and Mandukya and Prasna Upanishads belong to the Atharvan. The Muktikopanishad assigns to the Mandukya Upanishad, the pre-eminence among all the Upanishads. The famous Gaudapadiya Karika is a commentary on this Upanishad, and Sankaracharya has also furnished a Bhashya.

This is but a dry and uninteresting catalogue of names. There is scarcely time this evening to allow me to give you an idea of their character. I shall be happy, however, to place before you a brief sketch of the contents of some of them on a future occasion, should you continue to feel an interest in the subject. The Upanishads are the glory of ancient Indian Literature. There are those—very competent judges—who set a higher value on them than on any other branch of Indian learning. A great German writer, (Schopenhauer) writing about some Latin translation of the Upanishads, says, “From every sentence deep, original and sublime thoughts arise, and the whole is pervaded by a high, holy and earnest spirit... In the whole

world there is no study, except that of the originals, so beneficial and so elevating as that of the Upanishads. It has been the solace of my life; it will be the solace of my death ! " Let us who may if we choose study the originals, hope that they will be to us also the solace of our lives; and the solace, too, of our deaths !

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**DEVI CHAUDHURANI**

This translation of a few chapters of *Devi Chaudhurani* in Bankim's handwriting was found in the bound volume containing the manuscript of his *Letters on Hinduism*, lent to the Bangiya Sahitya Parishat by Kumar Bimal Chandra Singh of Paikpara, who first published this fragment about three years ago in the collection styled *Bankim-prativa*. We have corrected the mistakes in the above edition, due probably to wrong reading of the author's manuscript, and have introduced certain emendations within square brackets for the convenience of the reader.

We are told by Mr. Sachish Chandra Chatterjee, nephew and biographer of Bankim Chandra, that Bankim had translated into English the whole of *Devi Chaudhurani* and also a part of *Bisha Briksha*. We are further informed that the first draft of the English translation of *Devi Chaudhurani* was still extant, but the copy carefully corrected by the author was missing. We have been able to secure only the last few chapters of *Devi Chaudhurani* which are here printed.

Mr. Sachish Chandra also tells us that his uncle had translated a part of *Bisha Briksha* at the special request of Lady Elliott, the wife of Sir Charles A. Elliott, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal from 1890 to 1895, and had presented the manuscript to her. We have seen a few pages of an English translation of *Bisha Briksha* entitled *The Bane of Life* in Bankim's handwriting, but it is in too far decayed a condition to permit its inclusion in this volume.

On rushed the vessel in the dark, parting the gathering masses of foam at the prow. The wind roared, the clouds thundered, the lightning flashed, the rain fell in torrents, and on rushed the vessel, steady as in the serenest weather.

Brajeswar and Rangaraj now released the lieutenant.

"Be seated comfortably, sir," said Rangaraj, "the Rani probably will do you no harm. But you should not have boarded Devi Rani's vessel without her permission. Have you never heard that she is a goddess incarnate? But how was it, sir, if I may put the question, that you neglected to cut down our masts and destroy our sails, when you saw the clouds gathering in the heaven?"

"I never thought," replied the lieutenant, "that you would venture on such navigation as this. A sea-going vessel in the open seas may venture on such a course with impunity, but to sail in the dark in these narrow rivers, abounding in shoals and sand-banks, and before such a fearful driving tempest—I have never seen or heard [of] anything like it in the Bengal rivers. You are all in danger of your lives every moment."

"Not at all," replied Rangaraj, "these rivers are so familiar to us that we can navigate them with our eyes closed. The man at the helm is the first-steersman in these rivers."

The lieutenant paid little heed to Rangaraj's conversation; he felt sorely vexed at having been outwitted by a woman. Rangaraj finding him gloomy and taciturn, went out on the deck, and carefully watched the progress of the vessel. Brajeswar who wished to avoid being accosted by his father, had quietly glided away unobserved by him, but instead of going out, like Rangaraj, to the deck, he had glided into the next apartment, where he knew Prafulla was.

Haraballabh's condition at the time allowed him to bestow little attention on his son's movements. The rushing of the storm, while he was yet floating on the unstable element of water, had stupefied him. Then when he actually found the vessel part its moorings, and reel before the heavy gusts of wind, he lost at once both physical and mental equilibrium and found

himself stretched at length at Nisi's feet. Not exactly comprehending whether he was on the surface of the Teesta or at its bottom, he was discussing within himself whether there was any further use in calling on Durga to save him. A suppressed laugh from Nisi convinced him that probably he was not at the bottom, as he had never heard of any one indulging in laughter in those regions. So he mustered courage, tried to sit up and found that there was nothing to prevent his doing so. Nisi now took him in hand.

"Would you like to sleep sir ?" said she.

"This is not the time for sleep," said he.

"You will never find any other," replied Nisi, meaningly.

"What do you mean ?" asked Haraballabh, timidly.

"You came here as the spy who was to deliver over Devi Rani to the English."

"No—yes—you see—" stammered Haraballabh.

"Do you know what the consequences would have been to Devi, if you had succeeded ?"

"You see—I do not know—that is—" again stammered the cowardly wretch.

"She would have been hanged. She had done you no harm. On the contrary, she did you an infinite deal of good—remember the fifty thousand rupees. And in grateful recognition of this service, you wanted to get her hanged ! Do you know what punishment is meet for you ?"

Haraballabh had not the power to answer.

"Therefore, I say," continued Nisi, mercilessly, "sleep now. if you wish to sleep. For you will never see night again. Do you know where we are going ?"

Haraballabh spoke not.

"There is a melancholy burning ground," continued Nisi, "called the Witch's burning ground. Those whom we want to kill, we take there, and kill. We are going there now. The Saheb will be hanged, so the Rani has ordered. Do you know what punishment is reserved for you ? You will be impaled alive."

Haraballabh clasped his hands and cried like a child, "Save me ! save me !" he called out.

"Don't cry, you coward," thundered the lieutenant—"you are old—why can't you make up your mind to die?"

The roaring tempest prevented the sound being carried to Brajeswar's ears, or Nisi's plans might not have proceeded so smoothly.

"Save me! Can no one save me?" cried the coward still.

"Who is so base as to interfere on behalf of a wretch like you? The Rani I know is merciful—but no one shall seek mercy for you."

"I shall give you a lakh of rupees," said Haraballabh, "if you can save me."

"Is there no shame in you?" continued the pitiless Nisi, "for half that sun, you have turned the basest of informers. And dare you speak of *laklis*?"

"I will do whatever you may command me to do," groaned Hara-ballabh piteously.

"People like you can do nothing which is worth being done," replied Nisi contemptuously.

"The meanest," groaned the wretch again, "may be of use. Command, I beseech you—I will do your bidding. Do but save me."

"And supposing you can be of service to me," said Nisi in reply, softening her tone a little, "what trust can I put in you? You have shown yourself a rogue, a coward, an ungrateful wretch, and an informer. Can I trust you?"

"I will take any oath you prescribe," was the eager reply.

"Your oath!" ejaculated Nisi, contemptuously, "how will you swear?"

"By Ganga water, copper, and the Tulsi plant."

"No," said Nisi, "can you swear by your son?"

For once Haraballabh flashed up. "That I will not," said he with energy; "you are welcome to kill me in what way you like."

"Let us dispense with oaths then," said Nisi, vanquished for once. "They are not worth much from you, and as you are in our power, they are unnecessary. Do you wish to live?"

"Yes—yes—yes—save me!" was the piteous reply once more.

"Well then, listen," said Nisi, "my father is a great Kulin. It is hard to find husbands for daughters of our exalted line. We are restricted to only one clan, as you know, *viz.*, that to which you belong. I am married—

but I have a sister who has not been—because none of your clan has been found willing to take her. The objection is that she is past the marriageable age. She is now twenty-five or so. Now, if we cannot get her married to one of your clan, my father loses caste. Will you save us from the terrible fate ? ”

Haraballabh felt overjoyed—felt restored to life from the most horrible of deaths. Only another marriage ! That was a light affair for a Kulin Brahman. As to the bride’s age, even that was nothing very uncommon in the case of Kulin marriages. The reply he gave was exactly what Nisi had calculated upon.

“ This is not a great matter. It is the duty of Kulins to save other Kulins from such misfortunes as you anticipate. As to the bride’s age, why, I have seen brides given away at the hoary age of seventy. There is only one thing. I am myself too old to marry. Will not my son suit you ? ”

“ He may not be willing to marry,” objected Nisi, artfully.

“ My will is his will—he has never yet disobeyed me,” said Haraballabh. “ But I wonder how he came here to-night. Do you know ? ” asked he, quite at his ease now.

“ He came here to seek you,” said the inventive Nisi, who never objected to small fibs.

“ Where is he now ? ” asked Haraballabh.

“ He is quite safe—you shall see him in the morning. Will you make him consent to the marriage ? If so, we will let you depart in peace.”

“ Most willingly,” replied Haraballabh. “ Do go and obtain my pardon from the Rani.”

“ Look upon it as settled,” said Nisi. She then went to Devi, followed by Diva.

“ Nisi has been carrying on a whispered conversation with your father-in-law,” said Diva, maliciously, to Prafulla.

“ What about,” enquired Prafulla of Nisi.

“ Negotiating a marriage,” answered Nisi, “ would you like me to be your mother-in-law ? ”

“ Krishna forgotten, I see,” said Prafulla, laughing, certain that Nisi had not been negotiating her own marriage.

## CHAPTER...

The tempest subsided into a calm. Prafulla ordered her vessel to be anchored. When morning broke, she gave her instructions to Nisi, for she would not herself appear before Haraballabh, regarding the disposal of the prisoners.

"Let Rangaraj see them honourably dismissed. Let him provide my father-in-law with a conveyance to take him home; *palki*\* and bearers must be procurable in some adjoining village. Let the Saheb be provided with the expenses of his journey back to Rangpur. Tell him also that should any of his men have been wounded in yesterday's fray—he should instruct them to come to us; I will make them such compensation as money can give. Should any have died, I shall make some atonement by providing for their children."

Nisi nodded assent, but unknown to Prafulla, added some suggestions of her when communicating them to Rangaraj. She then suggested to Haraballabh, that it was time for his morning ablutions and prayer, and that he was at liberty to get on shore, but he must go in charge of a Barkandaz. At the same time, she somewhat ostentatiously called on Rangaraj to take the Saheb to the Witch's burial ground, and there hang him by the neck.

It was therefore with a heavy heart and much misgiving that Haraballabh went down to the beach, to say his morning prayers, in charge of a fierce-looking Barkandaz. While engaged in performing his ablutions, he saw the lieutenant march past him, accompanied by Rangaraj and a Barkandaz.

"Where is the Saheb going?" asked Haraballabh of the escort, timidly.

"To the gallows," replied Rangaraj, curtly.

Haraballabh trembled for himself. He forgot his prayers and hastened back to Nisi to ascertain the result of her interference on his behalf. Rangaraj however did not lead lieutenant Brennan to the gallows. He accompanied him to the nearest village, purchased a horse for him with Devi's money, provided him with funds for his journey, delivered him Devi's

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\* A native conveyance borne by men.

message, and then courteously bade him farewell. The lieutenant doubted very much in his mind whether these were robbers at all.

Haraballabh, on his return, found his reception somewhat different from what he had anticipated. A tempting repast consisting of fruits and sweets of various kinds, waited for him. Nisi pressed him to the refreshment with a courtesy and gentleness which contrasted strangely with the pitiless scorn with which she had tormented him the previous night. She reminded him significantly of the promise he had given her the previous night, and said that Brajeswar would be presently before him to receive his instructions. Brajeswar who had gone on shore for a stroll, shortly returned and found his father agreeably employed in trying the flavour of sundry nuts, pomegranates and other fruits. On seeing Brajeswar, Haraballabh who was certain that he was being watched, spoke to him in guarded language.

"I have not learnt, Brajeswar, how it happened that you were here yesterday," said he, "but this I can hear from you at leisure when we are at home. I understand that you came here to seek me, and I do not see that you are under any sort of restraint or in any trouble. Are you?"

"None whatever, sir," replied Brajeswar.

"That is good," resumed his father, "now I find myself hard-pressed on a matter in which I have not been able to give a refusal."

Haraballabh then briefly explained to Brajeswar Nisi's request, which certainly took him very much by surprise. "I have given her a sort of consent," said he, "and should you find the family of good caste, and otherwise free from reproach, I see no objection to the course proposed. It would be not only rescuing a family in distress, but would also go to meet your mother's and my own wishes to a certain extent, as we have both been anxious to see you suitably married again. You can ascertain further details from the lady whose sister the bride is and if you find nothing to object, you can contract the marriage and bring the bride home. I will return home at once, provided I can find a boat or other conveyance."

"A *palki* and its bearers are waiting for you, sir," said Brajeswar.

This was true, Rangaraj had procured them for him under Devi's orders. Haraballabh lost no time in starting home, glad to get out of the reach of the women, who had threatened to put him to a very disagreeable end. That he should leave his son in their hands made him somewhat un-

comfortable, but he consoled himself with the reflection that his son was young and handsome and evidently in the good graces of the dreadful women. A handsome face, thought he, vanquishes the fiercest of them.

"What is this new farce about, lady gay?" asked Brajeswar of Nisi, when his father was gone.

"Why, truly, you are more stupid than men generally are. Do you not see that you are to marry my sister and take her to your father's home?"

"Where is your sister, pray, and why am I to marry her?" asked Brajeswar.

"Here is my sister," replied Nisi, dragging Prafulla forward by the hand; "as to why you should marry her, is a question which you had better settle with her."

They now all comprehended Nisi's clever trick upon Haraballabh. But it did not produce the joyful effect she had anticipated. Both Prafulla and Brajeswar looked grave, while Diva began to whimpers at the idea of being separated from Prafulla.

"Your plan will not answer, lady gay," answered Brajeswar. "I must not deceive my father. If I take Prafulla to my father's house, I must tell him who she really is."

"Did I not say that you were more stupid than even the rest of your sex?" replied Nisi, sorely vexed. "What will your father say when he learns that his new daughter-in-law is no other than the famous robber Devi Chaudhurani?"

"Let Devi's name be never mentioned among us again," said Prafulla earnestly. "I have done with that life for ever. Wherever I live now, I shall now live as Prafulla, and die as Prafulla."

"Will Haraballabh Ray, think you, be more tender towards Prafulla than towards Devi?" asked Nisi with some bitterness.

"It is a matter," said Brajeswar, "which you had best leave me to settle. When I spoke to Prafulla last evening, I asked her to accompany me home. I make the same request again—I beg it of her. Should she consent, the rest is my business."

"Don't get angry, friend Brajeswar," said Nisi sweetly. "It is your business, but are you sure you will not mar it, as you did ten years ago?"

"Ten years make a great difference in a young man's life," said Brajeswar.

So it was settled. Brajeswar's plan of course was preferred to Nisi's. As Prafulla had just said, Devi was no more. She had disappeared from the theatre of the world for ever.

### CHAPTER . . .

And now Prafulla began her preparations for the journey to Bhutnath. The first step was to break the matter to the faithful and devoted Rangaraj. The task of explaining the matter fell upon Nisi. She performed it well and faithfully. Rangaraj wept at the thought of parting with his mistress, and for a time insisted on disbelieving Nisi's story. Prafulla then herself addressed him, in kind and affectionate language and exhorted him to follow her example. She commissioned him to disband her soldiers and the numerous attendants, male and female, who generally as now, resided at her headquarters at Devigad. At this place, which Rangaraj had named after her, Bhavani Pathak had caused a magnificent palace to be erected for her, to which Devi had added a magnificent temple dedicated to Krishna, and had endowed it munificently. Though she rarely lived there, Devigad formed her headquarters—where was kept the bulk of her treasure, all that part of her movable property which she did not keep in her boat, and where were collected the majority of her servants and retainers. All this, with certain reservations made in favour of Nisi and Diva, Prafulla gave away to Rangaraj, on the one condition that Rangaraj was to devote all that remained after satisfying his necessities, to the relief of distress. Then she addressed him as follows :

" Go and live there; may the gods preserve you ! You will never be in want. Never touch the sword or the musket again. That which you and Bhavani Pathak consider to be doing good, is really great and fearful oppression. You can never do good by brute force. It is for the God in heaven, and the King on earth, to punish the wicked. No one has delegated to you or to me that duty. Do good by all means, but do it by means which the Holy Shastras prescribe. Above all, be faithful to God. Tell Bhavani Thakur, that I shall die content if I ever hear that he has taken to the ways of peace."

Rangaraj left her there with his Barkandazes. Nisi and Diva would not leave Prafulla till she reached Bhutnath, whither they all proceeded in the great big boat. That boat, so well known as the residence of the Robber Princess, was to be destroyed, after it had reconveyed Nisi and Diva to Devigad. All the valuable properties it then contained—gold and jewels and other valuables in abundance, as the reader has seen,—were to become thenceforth the joint property of Nisi and Diva, to be devoted by them to charitable purposes. So strictly was Prafulla bent on redeeming her pledge to Krishna, that she was determined not to take with her to her husband's house anything beyond the cloth she wore.

"And sister, you contemplate entering your husband's house unadorned?" asked Nisi.

"A wife by the side of her husband," replied Prafulla, "stands in no need of ornaments."

"Accept my last service then—on the last day we spend together," said Nisi. "Allow a sister to decorate a sister in her own humble way."

So saying Nisi adorned Prafulla with the splendid set of jewels she had received as a present from the Raja, as the reader may remember. She had had no occasion to use them till now.

And now all serious business being done, the three ladies gave way to tears at the sorrow of parting. Diva of course set the example. The tears they shed were genuine; for as the reader has seen, they sincerely loved each other.

At length they reached Bhutnath. Prafulla took the dust of Nisi and Diva's feet, and bade them farewell, with streaming eyes. The great big boat started for Devigad with Nisi and Diva in it. Arrived at Devigad, they discharged the crew, and destroyed the vessel. They settled down into a quiet life, worshipping Krishna in the great temple there.

### CHAPTER . . .

Haraballabh had on his return home informed his household that Brajeswar might soon be expected back, with a new bride in his company. He had been obliged to add that the bride in this case was not a little child,

but a full-grown woman. The circumstance, though not absolutely rare, was not of frequent occurrence, and created considerable excitement, not only within Haraballabh's household, but throughout the village.

No sooner therefore Devi's great big boat touched the land at Bhutnath, than the news ran like wild fire throughout the village that Brajeswar had brought a great big bride in a great big boat. The arrival of a newly married bride is always an event in a Bengal village. But the excitement on this occasion was extraordinary. Old and young, the maimed and the halt, flew to Haraballabh's old and weather-beaten dwelling to see the bride, and it was amidst an immense throng of curious spectators that Brajeswar's mother stood out to receive the new daughter-in-law into her household. It is usual, at this stage, for the lady of the house to go through certain ceremonial forms indicative of affection towards the new daughter-in-law. One of these is called the *Varana*. During the *Varana* the bride stands veiled by the side of her husband. The lady of the house lifts the veil from the face to judge of the loveliness or otherwise of her face—for beauty is generally, in the eyes of the feminine portion of the Bengali population, the highest perfection which a bride can possess. With a thick veil drawn over her face Prafulla stood by her husband's side, according to custom. The *Ginny* gently lifted up the veil to see her face; she slightly started as she saw that lovely face, and dropped the veil rather abruptly. "Lovely face" said she, but she said nothing more. A tear stood in her eyes.

The assembled multitude of course clamoured for a sight of the lovely face, and many an old crone was prepared to lay violent hands on the bride and see what sort of a face it was that the thick veil covered. The *Ginny*'s tact however speedily put them to flight.

"Mothers!" said she, "my son and his bride have had to make a long journey to come here. They must be weary, hungry and thirsty. Go home now. Come back when we shall be all more comfortable. My daughter-in-law will of course live in my house. You can come and see her as often as you like."

This speech was of course eminently repulsive without being rude, and the assembled neighbours, highly incensed at the *Ginny*'s conduct, began to disperse. Many were the unfavourable remarks made on her conduct, not only on this, but on previous occasions. The bride was mercilessly criticised. She was, of course, a terribly big woman for any one to marry.

It was surmised that her years were probably on the wrong side of fifty. It was agreed without a single dissentient voice that she was horribly ugly, that was, it was concluded, the cause of the *Ginny's* reluctance to disclose her features to the public gaze. Brajeswar came in for his share. He must have been utterly demented to marry such a fright. The bride, it was finally concluded was probably a goblin or a *Dakini*,\* who had bewitched him. No one offering seriously to contest these views they gradually died out for want of opposition, and as darkness fell upon the village it peacefully went to sleep.

After the crowd had dispersed, and the clamour had subsided, at least within the household, the *Ginny* took Brajeswar aside.

"Where did you get this bride, Braja?" asked she.

"It is no new bride, mother," answered [Brajeswar]

"And where, my son," asked she with a tear in her eye, "did you find again the lost treasure?"

"He who gives all things has given her back to me," answered Brajeswar. "Do not speak about the matter to father just now. I intend seeing him when he is private, and then I shall disclose everything to him."

"Not you, my son," said she, "leave it to me. Let the *Pakasparsa* be over. Till then let all this remain a secret between us."

Brajeswar agreed. The *Pakasparsa* was celebrated without much eclat. And then the *Ginny* sought her lord at a fitting hour, and spoke to him.

"This is no new bride," said she, "it is our first daughter in law."

Haraballabh started as if shot through by an arrow.

"No! who says so?" said he in great agitation.

"I say so," said the *Ginny*. "I recognized her at once. Braja has also spoken to me. It is she."

"She died ten years ago" retorted Haraballabh contemptuously.

"She did not," replied his wife. "The dead do not return to life."

"Where then was she all these ten years? What life has she led?" enquired Haraballabh.

"I did not enquire," said the *Ginny*, "and I do not mean to enquire. It is enough for me, and it ought to be enough for you, that Braja has thought

\* A witch

it proper to bring her home. He is not a boy; he is at least as good a judge of right and wrong, as you or I; and it is him that this matter concerns most. We can rely on him."

"I must enquire," said Haraballabh, sullenly.

"No, do not," said the *Ginny* with a firmness which Haraballabh had rarely witnessed in her. "Have nothing to say in the matter. You once had your way about her, and the result was, that I was about to lose my only child. Have nothing to say about her again. I shall take poison if you do."

Haraballabh felt crushed. He had no answer to such an argument as this. There was no mistaking the earnestness with which it was put forward. Brajeswar was Haraballabh's only child, too, and he loved him better than he loved anything else. He gave in.

"Have your way in this matter," said he, "but manage prudently."

They never returned to the subject again. The *Ginny* in due time informed Brajeswar of the result of her conversation with her husband, and Brajeswar communicated it to Prafulla. There the matter ended, to the satisfaction of all parties.

The *Ginny* did well this time. Her triumph was due to her love for her son, and to the rectitude of her conduct.

## CHAPTER . . .

Prafulla wished to see Sagar. She spoke to Brajeswar; Brajeswar spoke to Brahma Thakurani, and Brahma Thakurani spoke to the *Ginny*. So messengers went to fetch Sagar.

Sagar learnt from them that her husband had married again—a big woman with a radiant countenance, the like of which had never been seen. The description reminded her of Devi, but it never entered her mind that Devi Rani had come back home to live with her husband. Sagar felt a sort of contempt for her husband. "What can have happened to him that he should think of marrying a big woman?" thought she. She was angry with him. "Marry again? Twice has he gone through the ceremony—is that

not enough ? Are we not his wives ?" She repined at her own lot " Why was I not born a poor man's daughter ? I might then have lived always near him He would never have married again, if I had lived near him "

It was in this frame of mind that Sagar reached her husband's home She made straight for Nayan Bahu She hated Nayan Tara, and Nayan Tara hated her, each in her own way But under this their common affliction, it was from her alone that she expected any sympathy Now Nayan Tara had been roaring and hissing like a pent up cobra ever since Prafulla set her foot in the house Her husband had seen her but once since his return, he had beat a precipitate retreat before the smart fire of her tongue, and had never ventured again into her presence Prafulla had come to her, hoping to make her a friend, she might as well have hoped to cultivate amicable relations with a hyæna or a bear Even her attendants and friends thought proper to keep at a distance at this time of excitement She had a number of children, who were the greatest sufferers of all They found that the advent of the new stepmother had made an extraordinary addition to the daily allowance of slaps and blows which they were accustomed to receive from their amiable mother as tokens of her affection

Sagar approached the bear who sat sullen in her den

" Come," said Nayan Tara on seeing, " why should you lag behind ? Is there any one else who wants to torment Nayan Tara ? Bring her too The time is come for worrying her to death "

This speech did not hold out much promise of the sympathy which Sagar had hoped for Nevertheless Sagar sought of her the information she was in need of

" Then it is true that he has married again ? "

" Married ? " replied Nayan Tara contemptuously, " I cannot tell you if there has been a marriage He has brought home a big woman That is all I know "

" Hush," said Sagar, tenderly sensitive on the subject of her husband's character, " do not speak in that strain "

" Can I speak in any other way of so big a bride ? "

" How old is she ? " asked Sagar wonderingly, " I presume as old as I, or even you "

"She may be of your mother's age," said Nayan Tara. "Some say she is about fifty."

"Hair grey?" asked Sagar, delighted at this description of the new rival.

"Evidently," said Nayan Tara, "or she would not persistently keep her head covered."\*

"Teeth gone, I suppose?" suggested Sagar.

"The teeth go when the hairs grow grey—the thing is so plain, I wonder you ask."

"She must be very much older than our husband?" said Sagar.

"Is she not?" replied Nayan Tara, "what have I been telling you all this while?"

"That cannot be,"† protested Sagar.

"It often is the case in Kulin households," maintained her rival.

"She is very handsome, I hear."

"Handsome truly!" exclaimed Nayan Tara, with great indignation, "a pale bloated frightful thing."

"And had you nothing to say to him who made this extraordinary choice?" asked Sagar.

"Say? You will see, if I can get hold of him," replied Nayan Tara.

"I must have a look at this specimen of youth and beauty," said Sagar, fully prepared to see a most grotesque being.

Sagar found Prafulla on the steps leading to the tank situated within the premises. She found her seated on the steps, scouring some utensils of brass used in the kitchen. She was seated with her back towards the direction from which Sagar was coming. Somebody told Sagar that this was the new *Bahu*. Sagar approached and accosted her.

"Are you our new sister?"

Prafulla turned round. "Is it you, sister Sagar?" said she.

Sagar was thunderstruck. The last person she expected to see in the new rival was the very person she saw.

"Devi Rani!" she exclaimed in amazement.

\* With Hindu females, this is a sign of modesty.

† According to the Hindu Shastras the wife ought to be younger than the husband.

"Hush," replied Devi Rani. "Devi Rani is dead. Come to my apartment, and I will explain all. This is not the place."

The two then left, each entwining the other's neck with her arm. They conversed in private for a long while, till all was explained. Sagar was delighted. Sagar could never think of Devi as a rival.

"But," said Sagar, "do you believe that this domestic life will suit you? After your throne of silver and diadem of gold, does this scouring of kitchen utensils suit you? Will the thorough adept in the Yoga Philosophy patiently listen to Brahma Thakurani's lectures on the art of frying fish? Will the lady who commanded hosts submit to the dictation of foolish men and silly crones?"

"I have come here," said Prafulla, "because I think that *this* life will suit me better than the other. *This* is the woman's proper sphere—woman was not made to reign. And this discipline—that which has to be acquired within the four walls of the family dwelling-house, is the highest and severest of all disciplines. Here you have to deal every day with a number of illiterate, often selfish, generally ignorant people; and it has to be made your object that you shall to the best of your ability, promote their happiness and welfare, very often in spite of themselves. And you have to do it, when you yourself are a subordinate, one of the ruled, not the ruler; when you have not the power to dispose of things in your own way—where you must expect every effort of yours for good opposed, thwarted and often overruled. And it is only by inexhaustible patience, unflinching self-sacrifice, and only through passionate love of good that you can properly fulfil your destiny in the domestic life. It is much easier to rule a kingdom. It is much easier to give up the world, and to lead an ascetic life. True asceticism, true devotion to Him who has commanded us to act only for others and not for ourselves can be found only here, the station most difficult fitly to occupy. The grandest life, or the loftiest sphere is not that in which there is the most show and ostentation, but that which calls for the exercise of your highest gifts. I am ambitious, sister, of the highest station woman can occupy—that of the wife and the mother, and therefore I am here."

"Let me see," said Sagar, "how you fulfil this lofty destiny."

It was the case of common sense striving to comprehend transcendent genius.

## CHAPTER . . .

As days, months, and years passed by, Sagar found that Prafulla was gradually more and more successful in approaching the high ideal of heroism which had so fascinated her. A change came gradually over the house since the day Prafulla had set her foot there. There was some one, an outside observer would have felt, some one watching, silent and unobserved, the interests of every one in the house; some one who did for others, what the others should have done, but omitted to do; some one who took care that the needy should have food before asking for it, that the hard-worked should have rest before feeling weary, that the sick should have his medicine or his diet at the exact moment it was wanted; some one who always lent a helping hand to the weak, had always a kind word for the sorrowful, always a word of sympathy for the wronged, always a word of encouragement for the honest and the good. Some one, too, who always anticipated and prevented a jealous outbreak in the household, by providing that the cause of jealousy should not exist, some one who nipped the display of angry feelings in the bud, who caused quarrels to be made up as soon as they broke out, who promoted peace and love and good order among all. Nayan Tara's children, hitherto always ill-cared for and neglected, first felt the effect of Prafulla's presence. Prafulla made them her special charge, and soon converted them into a cleanly, healthy, peaceful and mutually loving set of little things. Nayan Tara herself ceased to growl, acknowledged the existence of a benevolent, a thoroughly loving spirit, which, repel it as she might, was never weary of seeking her good, and acknowledged for the first time in her life that she had a friend. And then the influence of the master spirit under which she fell wrought a marvellous change in her. She now quarrelled less; her bursts of temper became less and less frequent, till they almost disappeared; she learnt even to be civil in her speech; spoke to her husband with respect and affection; and submitted herself entirely to Prafulla's guidance. Prafulla's mother-in-law early discerned Prafulla's patience, industry and tact, and gradually made over to her hands, as the one next to her in rank, the management of the household, and spent her own time either in caressing her grand-children or in the worship of the gods. She found household affairs improve wonderfully under Prafulla's superintendence. There was more abundance, but less expenditure; there

was less waste, while the poor were better fed; the dairy produce was richer than it ever had been; the children grew in health and beauty; the servants became cleanly, hardworking, orderly, and faithful; the cattle looked sleek and well-fed; every inch in the house was clean and neat; and all the while the drain on Haraballabh's purse diminished sensibly. Haraballabh himself could not remain long insensible to the marvels wrought by his once despised daughter-in-law. He admired her and grew fond of her, and began to seek her counsel even in those graver matters which fell within his special province,—the management of his estates, his relations with those outside his household. He was always struck with the prudence and sagacity of her suggestions, and though often he stood aghast at the unflinching honesty of purpose which dictated them, he found that in the long run, her suggestions were also those which brought him the largest amount of revenue. There were now fewer disputes with other proprietors, less recusancy among the ryots; less fraud among the agents, and more punctual and abundant collection of the revenues. Haraballabh, too, followed the example of his wife, and made over the management of his affairs to Brajeswar. Brajeswar had caught the spirit of his wife, and under their joint management, Haraballabh gained in prosperity and affluence every year.

Extending now her influence beyond the narrow circle of her own home, Prafulla worked in the same style for all who lived within her reach. All felt her influence and willingly submitted to it. She was now universally felt to be the benefactor of all—the good and kind *mother* as all who knew her styled her.

Sagar, who had undertaken to watch her success, was so fascinated by it, that she now lived very frequently at her husband's house, often disobeying the commands of her parents to come and live with them. Prafulla found in her a most useful assistant.

If Prafulla ever had a quarrel, it was with Brajeswar. She felt it to be wrong that he should give all his love to her, and should have nothing but courtesy and kindness for Sagar and Nayan Tara. "Unless you learn to love them as you love me, I will not admit that you love me fully. For I have learnt to feel that they and I form one and the same being. What is painful to them is painful to me." These lectures however had little effect; everything else happened as she wished to happen—so marvellous was the influence of unswerving love for all, guided by high and serene intelligence;

of the culture which the great Doctrine of "Niskam Dharma" had imparted to her. Here was the abnegation of self—the asceticism which the Bhagabat Gita had taught her. She sought, not happiness, for that was what pertained to self—but work, which meant with her, work for others. And to the accomplishment of that work she brought an intelligence superb by nature, but improved by the highest culture. Bhavani Thakur had sought to fashion the true steel into a perfect weapon. A perfect weapon it now was—but alas for Bhavani Thakur! it did quite other and far nobler work than that for which he had intended it.

And of that great culture—theoretical and practical—none in Bhutnath ever knew. Few could ever divine that Prafulla could even read and write,—so little are the externals of knowledge necessary to the performance of our highest functions in life. True culture, like solid gold, has no sound to give forth. Book-knowledge like hollow brass, resounds magnificently.

And now full of years, wealth and happiness Haraballabh breathed his last. The property devolved on Brajeswar of course. Sagar's father, too, died in the course of time. His wife refused to survive him. This world, she said, would be to her an intolerable solitude now that he was taken away. She had no son; she declined to stand longer in the way of Sagar's happiness by keeping her separated from her husband; and she declined to live in dreary solitude of the sonless widow's life. So she sacrificed herself on her husband's funeral pyre. This brought Brajeswar an immense accession of property. Wealth rapidly multiplied itself under his careful management, guided by the genius of his wife, so much so that Prafulla now reminded her husband of the *loan*.

"What loan?" asked her husband in surprise.

"The fifty thousand rupees I lent you on board my vessel fifteen years ago. You can now afford to repay it. It is very small to you now."

"Gladly," answered her husband. "But what do you want to do with the money?"

"It is not mine," said she, "it must be paid back to the owner."

"Who I remember," said Brajeswar, "is Krishna himself. I remember, too, your advice how to remit to him."

"The interest has to be paid," suggested his wife.

"Say, it has doubled the principal," answered Brajeswar.

"Krishna is not avaricious," said his wife, "but surely seeing that he has given you so much wealth and prosperity—."

"Krishna's agents are very grasping, I see," said Brajeswar laughing. "Will two hundred thousand content him ?"

"I will be satisfied with it at present," said Prafulla. "Now, how do you propose to remit the money ?"

"In a rather convenient way," answered the husband, "I will found an asylum for the destitute, and endow it."

"That will do," answered the wife.

Brajeswar built an asylum for the destitute, endowed it, placed an image of the Goddess of Plenty there, and called it '*Devi Niketan*'—that is, the abode of the goddess (Devi) of Plenty.

Devi had now many children whom she brought up with special care. To the boys she taught truth, manliness, courage—pretty much after the fashion Bhavani Pathak had followed in her case. To the girls she imparted the feminine culture which had been hers by nature, and which had been improved by the refining influence of her great love of the Pure and Holy.

And then full of years and happiness, at a ripe old age, Devi closed this life for a still nobler one—mourned by all as the "good and pious mother of all."

I have only a word to add regarding Bhavani Pathak. Now that the British Government had settled the country, and stamped out crime, Bhavani's occupation was gone. He had no more wrongs to redress; the law had asserted itself and resumed its function. So he dispersed his men, and betook [himself] to literature and philosophy. And pondering deeply on his past life, in the seclusion and enforced idleness to which he found himself condemned, he found serious reasons to doubt whether he had moved in the right path. The doubts became stronger and stronger as he meditated on the purity of Him, whose nature the great systems of philosophy of which he was such a master sought to expound. At last he was convinced. He had gone wrong. An atonement was needed to expiate his crimes. So he went and delivered himself up to the authorities. As no crime then capitally punishable was proved against him, he was sentenced to transportation. He sailed cheerfully across the sea and ended his days in banishment.



## **LETTERS**

These letters of Bankim, written in English to private correspondents, are printed here, as still of some interest.

The first thirteen of these, addressed to Sambhu Chandra Mookerjee, editor of *Mookerjee's Magazine*, were published, with notes, by Mr. Sanjib Chandra Sanyal in *Bengal : Past and Present* (April-June 1914, pp. 273-84). These have been reproduced here, with Mr. Sanyal's notes which, we trust, will be found useful.

The fourteenth letter, addressed to Jagadish Nath Ray, has been reproduced, in part, from the life of Bankim (3rd edn., p. 389) written by his nephew Mr. Sachish Chandra Chatterjee.

Of the fifteenth, eighteenth and nineteenth letters, which were addressed to Nobin Chandra Sen, the first and third have been reproduced here from the latter's autobiography, *Ámár Jivan*, pt. iii. 229-30 and pt. iv. 130, and the second from an article in the *Sahitya* for Falgun 1300 B.S. (pp. 864-65), written by Mr. Hirendra Nath Datta.

The sixteenth and seventeenth letters were addressed to Bhudeb Mukherjee, and have been included here through the courtesy of Srimati Anurupa Devi.

We have appended notes wherever we have thought it necessary for the convenience of the reader.

I,

Berhampore,  
The 14th March, [1872]

My Dear Sir,

I am very happy to acknowledge your favour of the 11th. You are mistaken in considering me a stranger, I claim the honour of being acquainted with you; we have met more than once.

I scarcely know how to thank you for the many fine things you are kind enough to say of me. But as I know that my obligations to you in this respect are of long standing, I will not seek to diminish their weight by a tardy return of thanks.

I wish you every success in your project \* I have myself projected a Bengali Magazine† with the object of making it the medium of communication and sympathy between the educated and the uneducated classes. You rightly say that the English for good or for evil has become our vernacular, and this tends daily to widen the gulf between the higher and the lower ranks of Bengali society. This, I think, is not exactly what it ought to be, I think that we ought to *disanglicise* ourselves, so to speak, to a certain extent, and to speak to the masses in the language which they understand. I therefore project a Bengali Magazine. But this is only half the work we have to do. No purely vernacular organ can completely represent the Bengali culture of the day. Just as we ought to address ourselves to the masses of our own race and country, we have also to make ourselves intelligible to the other Indian races, and to the governing race. There is no hope for India until the Bengali and the Panjabī understand and influence each other, and can

\* In 1872 Dr Sambhu Chandra Mookerjee revived his *Mookerjee's Magazine* and asked Bankim Chandra to help him with contributions. The first series of *Mookerjee's Magazine* contained only five numbers and were published from January to May, 1861.

† The celebrated *Banga Darshana* whose appearance in 1872 marked an epoch in the history of Bengali literature. Its effect was like that of the *Edinburgh Review*. The learning of the new journal, its talent, its spirit, its writing were all new.

bring their joint influence to bear upon the Englishman. This can be done only through the medium of the English, and I gladly welcome your projected periodical. But I have thought it necessary to give you my ideas on the subject of an Anglo-Bengali literature at length, because you will find me singing to a different tune on other occasions, on the principle that each side of a question must be put in its strongest light, specially when we have to fight against a popular one.

After this, I need not tell you that I shall not want in inclination to co-operate with you, and if my literary services are worth enlisting on your side, they are at your disposal. It is true I am likely to be a little over-worked at present, owing, not to my literary engagements, but to a reduction in the number of officers at our Station, but I will nevertheless make time both for your Magazine and mine. And if it be worth while to insert my name in your list of contributors I have no objection to your doing so.

Hoping this will find you all serene, I am,

My Dear Sir,  
Yours truly,  
Bankim Ch. Chatterji.

## II.

Berhampore,  
March 27, 72.

My Dear Sir,

Many thanks for your kind offer of assistance in regard to my journal. Such a coadjutor as yourself would be invaluable, and if men like you took an interest in it, there can be no doubt that I shall succeed.

For the English Magazine, I can undertake to supply you with novels, tales, sketches and squibs. I can also take up political questions, as you wish. Malicious fortune has made me a sort of jack of all trades and I can turn up any kind of work, from transcendental metaphysics to verse-making. The quality of course you can't expect to be superior, but I will do all I can for you. The Novel is to me the most difficult work of all, as it requires a good deal of time and undivided attention to elaborate the conception and to subordinate the incidents and characters to the central idea.

I do not approve of Tara Prasad's\* suggestion that the Magazine† should be a quarterly. I prefer monthly publication

I don't think of going to Calcutta till the rains, or till at least it is a little cooler and railway travelling becomes possible When I do go however I will make it a point to call upon you

Hoping this will find you all serene, I am,

Yours truly,  
Bankim Ch Chatterji

## III

Berhampore,  
; May 13, 72

My Dear Sambhu,

I don't see why we should "Babu" each other Pray, call me plain Bankim in future

Many thanks for your kind opinion of my periodical I was rather disappointed to find that the *Patriot*‡ contained no review of it, specially as I had requested my publisher to send out presentation copies to no Editors except yourself My publisher§ has not I find strictly acted up to my wishes

\* Babu Tara Prasad Chatterjee was one of Bankim Chandra's collaborateurs in the *Banga Darshana*. He was an able writer both in English and Bengalee and was a reputed member of the Provincial Executive Service

† Mookerjee's Magazine (second series) was neither monthly nor quarterly Only ten numbers used to appear in a year It was stopped by the end of 1876 when Dr Mookerjee was called away by His Highness Maharaja Bir Chandra Deb Manickya Bahadur of Independent Tipperah to be his Minister Associate

‡ The *Hindoo Patriot* Dr Sambhu Chandra Mookerjee was about this time a very frequent contributor of the *Hindoo Patriot*, and most of the reviews which appeared in the paper about this time were written by him Babu Kristo Das Pal was then the responsible editor of the paper

§ Babu Brajamadhav Basu a Native Christian, who had a press at 1, Peepulputty Lane, Bhowanipur, Calcutta He printed and published the *Banga Darshana* for the first year

My pot-bellied reviewer\* comes out strong under the disguise of an anonymous correspondent—as he did on previous occasions when he had to review my books. On this occasion, however, it is possible that the writer is a genuine correspondent, for the review has very much the appearance of having been written by some lad who has yet his Entrance Examination test to pass. You will hardly find it worthy of being replied to in the columns of the *Patriot*, but nevertheless I have asked my publisher to send you the paper, if only to enable you to teach the Editor a lecture on the impropriety of admitting silly communications which disgrace journalism.

You can hardly catch me tripping in the matter of that treacle [? tirade] of mine against Anglicism. I was prudent enough to make a salvo in the case of people who take up your ground. I have carefully distinguished between the case of those who speak to India at large and the ruling caste and that of those who address their own race only. And you may remember I warned you that you will find me singing to another tune on the ground that one must place, [or] always try to place, his view of a question in the strongest light, if he wants to persuade.

Your remarks on the getting [up] of the *Banga Darsana*, I have communicated to the manager. He must improve. Poor Dinabandhu† is not responsible for that feeble article on our costume. It was from another celebrity, whom I was obliged to humour.

When do you bring out your first issue ? I have got the prospectus. I hope to commence a tale in your Magazine, as soon as I get my contributors to work in earnest. I hope to be in time for your second issue. Pray, try to enlist Raj Krishna Mukerjee, M.A.,‡ of the High Court Bar, one of our most promising young men. Babu Gooroo Churan Dass, Depy. Magistrate may be of use to you, if you ask him. No more space.

Yours very truly,  
B. C. Chatterji.

\* Most probably Pandit Dwarka Nath Vidyabhushan, the famous editor of the weekly Bengali newspaper, *Somprakash*.

† Rai Dinabandhu Mitra Bahadur, the greatest humorous writer of Bengal. Bankim Chandra became his biographer after his death.

‡ In July, 1873, he entered the service of the Bengal Government as its Bengali Translator.

## IV.

Berhampore,  
July 22, 72

My Dear Sambhu,

So you are out at last! First of all I congratulate you on your excellent getting up. I have not yet gone through all the articles, but I have skipped over them all, and what I have read leaves no doubt in my mind that the Magazine will be a success. I am specially glad of the eloquent tribute of affection you pay to my lamented friend Girish.\* Ras Behari's orthography is disgraceful e.g., Jashbir for Jasohir, Protip for Pratap etc. He makes also some ludicrous mistakes and cites the ब्रितिश संहासन for the *Betal Panchisi*. Baidyanath† is a very well article "Infant Marriages" & is not worthy of the Rev K M Banerji. The article on Lobb|| is, I believe, by Ashutosh Mukarji—is it not? So far as I have read, it seemed very clever. Why is the single epigram from the *Sanskriti* headed "Epi-

\* The first article in the second series of *Mookerjee's Magazine* was headed "A Great Indian, but a Geographical Mistake" by the Editor Dr Sambhu Chandra Mookerjee. Girish Chandra Ghosh, the founder of the *Hindoo Patriot* and the *Bengalee* newspapers of Calcutta, was one of the best English writers among the Indians. His life and writings have been recently published by his grandson, Babu Manmathanath Ghosh.

† Babu Rash Behari Bose, a Member of the Provincial Executive Service, contributed in the first number of *Mookerjee's Magazine* (second series) an article on the "Antiquities of Jessori Ishwaripur". He was then Deputy Magistrate of Jessori.

‡ This refers to the serial article entitled "A Visit to Baidyanath" begun in the first number of *Mookerjee's Magazine* (second series) by Babu Bholanauth Chunder the well known author of *The Travels of a Hindoo*.

§ The correct heading of the article contributed by the Rev Krishna Mohan Banerjea in the first number of *Mookerjee's Magazine* (second series) is "Infantine Marriages in India".

|| This refers to the article on "Mr Lobb on the Calcutta University By a Graduate of the University" who was the late Babu Asutosh Mukherjee the first Premchand Roychand scholar of the Calcutta University.

§§ In the same number appeared an Epigram on "Woman's Lips" by the late Maharaja Sir Jotindro Mohan Tagore Bahadur with the heading "Epigrams from the *Sanskrit*". The plural number indicated that more epigrams by the same "live Raja" would appear gradually in *Mookerjee's Magazine*, and as a matter of fact, more epigrams did appear in the journal.

grams?" The Epigram itself does not seem to me to be in any way Epigrammatic, but then it is written by a live Raja, and the title may, like charity, cover a multitude of sins. Rajendra's article\* is, of course, superb. I wish he had given us more of it. And your squib on Tobacco† is also capital. I wish you would go on as you have begun.

I suppose you continue to get my Magazine. If so, I don't think it will be necessary to send you another copy in exchange for yours.

I have not forgotten my promise to contribute my little mite to your Magazine. Trusting this will find you all hale and hearty,

I am,  
Yours sincerely,  
Bankim Ch. Chatterji.

## V.

Berhampore,  
Sept. 4, 72.

My Dear Sambhu,

Kindly excuse the long delay which has taken place in replying to you. At first something or other made me put off the reply—and then came a long and serious illness, from which I have just been freed.

I would have redeemed my promise and contributed my humble mite to your Maga[zine] but for my illness. All brain-work is prohibited to me at present, so much so that I have been obliged to make over my own Maga[zine] to a friend, *pro tem.*

By the way is your second issue out?‡ I fancy not. If so, you are sadly wanting in punctuality. Of course you never promised punctuality, but restricted your engagements to ten issues in the year. But still you are lagging behind.

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\* This refers to the article on "The Homer of India" in the same number of the Magazine contributed by the well-known Dr. Rajendralala Mitra. In this article the learned Doctor refutes in his own inimitable way, Weber's theory that Valmiki borrowed his theme of the *Ramayana* from Homer. It is really a masterly contribution.

† This refers to Dr. Mookerjee's article "On Tobacco and Smoking." He was himself a veteran tobacco-smoker.

‡ The second number of *Mookerjee's Magazine* appeared in September, 1872.

I assure you I do not deserve—at least have long ceased to deserve—your compliments on my gallantry I see you have not forgiven my transgressions I yet hope you will

The *Observer*\* is hard upon you As you are able to hold your own against the *Observer*, I wish you won't waste breath on the subject

I never read the *Bengal Times*? What did he say?

Trusting this will find you all hale,

I am,  
Yours sincerely,  
Bankim Ch Chatterji

## VI

Berhampore,  
Septr 27, 72

My Dear Sambhu,

I have been unable to write to you in acknowledgment of your second number, which is really splendid I have liked almost all the articles—that on Nuddea specially “Oviparous Genesis”§—evidently by Rajendra—is also first rate I have had a relapse and am still unable to do my usual amount of work Will you be in town during the holidays?

Yours sincerely,  
Bankim Ch Chatterji

\* The well known Anglo Indian weekly of Calcutta *The Indian Observer* which was started by Mr Charles Towney, Sir Alfred Croft Sr Henry Cotton R H Wilson Lt Col R D Osborne and others in February 1871

† *The Bengal Times* of Dacca edited by Mr E C Kemp On the partition of Bengal it took the name of *Eastern Bengal and Assam Era*

‡ This refers to the article on ‘The Antiquity and Importance of Nuddea and the History of its Sanskrit University I The School of Logic’ by Pandit Madhava Chandra Sarma Deputy Inspector of Schools and the Editor

§ This article was signed MITRANUS who was Dr Rajendralala Mitra

## VII.

Berhampore,  
28th December [1872.]

My Dear Sambhu,

Really you take me by surprise. Were you my debtor? That is a lucky discovery. I thought it was I who had lagged behind in the matter of correspondence. Now that you confess yourself to be in the wrong, I hold myself entitled to read you a lecture. That intellectual treat I reserve for a future occasion.

Ashu of Chooa has been defaming me. In the first place I don't keep good health, though I always did justice to the sweetmeats and other non-eatables manufactured at Chooa. In the second place I have been doing right loyal service to the State by trying to fill its coffers, so that it may rebuild the Jagur barracks and indulge in other magnificent pastimes, to the edification of the tax-paying public. What the devil do niggers want their money for? They had better pay in their all at the Government Treasuries, and Government will do them an immense deal of good by erecting uninhabitable barracks and by abolishing slavery in Zanzibar. You see my work is genuine philanthropy. The luxury of [illegible, taxing the?] people for their own good! I am afraid you outsiders don't appreciate it.

*Mookerjee* is getting on so splendidly that I thought such little assistance as I could render was not needed. But since you wish that even the coarse and scentless *Dhutura* should bloom in your *Nandana* (excuse poetical flights) by the side of the *Mandara* and the *Parijata*, why, you shall be satisfied. Now, let me know what I shall write. Stories? But you seem to have enough of them, and one serial story like *Bhubaneswari*\* is enough for one Maga[zine]: Shall it be a review? I won't take up politics, because then I would be sure to rouse the indignation of Anglo-Saxonia against *Mookerjee*. That is why *Banga Darsan* has so little of politics in it. Shall I send you light sketchy things which shall be neither flesh nor fish nor red herring? Do you want nonsense? I can manufacture that precious commodity *ad libitum*.

\* This refers to the serial article on "Bhooboneshoree or the Fair Hindu Widow" by Babu Rash Behari Bose which commenced in the October number of *Mookerjee's Magazine* of 1872.

One should think from the lengthy apology you tack to your note that you have been falsely accusing me of murder, robbery and rape. You only said wise and good things, and I don't see that needed an apology.

When do you issue your next? By the end of January I suppose? Trusting this will find [you] as jolly as ever,

I am,  
Yours sincerely,  
Bankim Ch. Chatterji.

## VIII.

Berhampore,  
The 5th January, 73.

My Dear Sambhu,

A happy New Year to you and to your maga[zine].

I am engaged in writing something for you. Indeed it is ready, and it should have gone before this, but I am obliged to wait a little for one or two books I find it necessary to refer to.

If you are issuing your next in the middle of January, why, I must wait for your next issue.

Pray don't insert that bit of confession\* anywhere. Campbell and Bernard† know enough of me to be able to identify this penitent at once. Not that they would hang me if they did, but it would not be [at] all agreeable.

My story (the one intended for *Mookerjee*) shall wait till Bhubaneswari chooses to leave the coast clear, though I certainly don't wish for such a consummation.

Trusting this will find you all serene,

I am,  
Yours sincerely,  
Bankim Ch. Chatterji.

\* This refers to the article on "The Confessions of a Young Bengal" by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee published in the December number of *Mookerjee's Magazine* of 1872. The publication, it seems, took place, notwithstanding the author's unwillingness to see his article in print.

† Sir George Campbell, then Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal and his Secretary, Mr. (afterwards Knighted) Charles Bernard.

## IX.

Berhampore,  
The 19th Jany. [1873.]

My Dear Sambhu,

There are three good libraries in Berhampore, and I have got the books I wanted, but have been unable to make the use of them I intended from [want] of time. I have been busy writing the *Banga Darsan* for Falgun. I have, therefore, been unable to finish my paper intended for *Mookerjee*. It does not matter, however : for if I waited to finish it, it might grow too bulky for your maga[zine] : I therefore send you the paper\* as it is, rather incomplete, but still in a readable shape. I hope you will accept it. If you do, I will try to send you another instalment and complete my plan.

I have been obliged to send you the rough draft as a matter of course—rather tough work for the printer, as I write the worst hand in the world. I am afraid I must ask you to send me a proof, if you admit the article.

Nor have I been able to revise the paper carefully—so if you can make time, pray carefully look over the grammar, about which I don't pretend to be over-careful. Some small critics, white of course, have been carping at the grammar of your maga[zine].

I have to thank you for a copy of your pamphlet, so kindly sent to me. Of course the “The Prince in India”† is not new to me, though I never had an opportunity of reading it through. I am doing so now.

\* When do you bring out your next No. ?

Tusting this will find you all serene,

I am,  
Yours sincerely,  
Bankim Ch. Chatterji.

\* This refers to Bankim Chandra's article on “The Study of Hindu Philosophy” by B. C. C. published in the May number of *Mookerjee's Magazine* of 1873.

† *The Prince in India and to India, by an Indian : A Memorial of H. R. H. The Duke of Edinburgh's Visit to India, etc.*, by Sambhu Chandra Mukhopadhyaya, Calcutta, 1871.

## X.

Berhampore,  
February 6, 72 [1873.]

My Dear Sambhu,

I am sorry I have disappointed you. But it is so much easier to write a serious essay than things which go under the name of *light* literature, that the temptation was strong upon a hard-worked poor devil like me. If you dislike the paper I sent you, you can consign it to your rubbish basket. I will take the earliest opportunity of sending you something more to your liking, but that earliest opportunity may not altogether be an early one.

Every European with Lord Northbrook's candour and wide sympathies will say what he said about *Mookerjee*. The critics I spoke of are of that class who are impatient of anything Bengali which is good; and their criticism does not go beyond the debatable points of grammar, as you can see in the English weeklies. You can afford to despise these critics, but then that is no reason why I, who am conscious of my weakness, should not take care.

I never had more things on my hand than I have just now. Trusting this will find you more free to enjoy life than your humble collaborateur,

I am, ..  
Yours sincerely,  
Bankim Ch. Chatterji.

## XI.

Berhampore,  
The 16th March, [1873.]

My Dear Sambhu,

I have received only the latter half of the proof,\* and this I received only yesterday evening. The other half I have not yet received. The post is very regular with me; so pray don't abuse it. I will send you the proof back as soon as I receive the whole. I see the printer has made glorious

\* This refers to the proof of Bankim Chandra's article on "The Study of Hindu Philosophy" referred to already.

work out of my delicate calligraphy. It is lost labour to ask me to write legibly. You may as well preach to the winds.

More hereafter. I am rather fidgetting just now.

Yours sincerely,  
Bankim Ch. Chatterji.

## XII.

Banga Darsan,  
Editor's Office, Berhampore,  
The [Not dated] 187.\*

My Dear Mirza Sambhu Chandra,

The story about my illness was a pure fiction. The gentlemen who gave it out in the papers managed also to send news of my death to my house at Kantalpara.† The announcement in the *Haleeshahar Patrika*‡ of my illness was intended merely to create belief in the report of my death sent to my relatives, this being supposed an excellent way of punishing a man for his literary opinion.§

I wish there were the same amount of truth in the news of *your* illness —which you yourself give. But as you have got rid of it, we will not discuss the question further.

“Shawkari Jawlpawn”§§ (am I right in the orthography?) is a capital fellow, and I wish I could “emetet” not only his orthography, but also his great good sense and his exquisite English. And I am grateful to the naughty fellow for making room for poor “Bankim” in the same para with

\* This letter was most probably written in June 1873.

† Near Naihati Station, Eastern Bengal State Railway, where Bankim Chandra was born and where his ancestral house is situated.

‡ The *Halishahar Patrika* was started in Calcutta in 1870 as a monthly by a resident of Halishahar, a village in the Twenty-four Parganas. In 1873 it became weekly.

§ In the *Banga Darshana* Bankim Chandra used to review critically, and often severely, the current literature of Bengal. By this he offended some people.

§§ This refers to the correspondence headed “What he should not be : By Shau-kare Jaulpwan” published in the June number of *Mookerjee's Magazine* of 1873.

yourself and that deaf "Sabbhaung" May the shadow of that orthographical prodigy never grow less!

I ought to have told you that your last double number\* was the best you have issued—the best—so far as I know which the "head eater" † of any magazine—has succeeded issuing in India—almost all the articles were very good, the Bride of Shambhu Das‡ exquisite. The article on Commerce§ I read with avidity—is Bhola Nath Chunder the writer? The design of the Avatar|| was well conceived—but it is easily seen that your engraver is not first rate.

Mr De's†† review of विष्णुकृष्ण is rather of the faint praise and civil sneer type. The reviewer is evidently the editor himself, who grossly contradicts some statements he made in an article he contributed to the *Calcutta Review* a few years ago. R C Dutt|| writes to me that he intends reviewing the book in the *Patriot*. Will your head Eatership condescend to eat my head in *Mookerjee*? An exquisite critic in the *Somprakash*—Pot Belly himself for aught I know—pronounces the book unreadable, and the author an unmitigated dunce. This is high praise. Praise from such a quarter would have damned the book.

That promised second part of Hindu Philosophy is a Frankenstein which would kill me. To make it worthy of your maga[zine] I must go through

\* That is Number IX & X published together as a double number in June 1873

† Head-eater is a pun for Editor

‡ This refers to the poem on 'The Bride of Sambhudos A Tale of Pingal' begun by Ram Sharma (Babu Nabagopal Ghosh who is still living at Baranagar) in the June number of *Mookerjee's Magazine* of 1873

§ This refers to the serial article on 'A Voice for the Commerce and Manufactures of India' by Babu Bholanath Chunder the well known author of *The Travels of a Hindoo*, begun in the same number of the journal

||§§ This refers to the frontispiece illustration called A Modern Avatar published in the same issue of the Journal. This was a caricature of an incident of Sir George Campbell's Lieutenant Governorship of Bengal. The modern Avatar (incarnation of God) was, of course Sir George himself.

†† This refers to the review of *Bisha Briksha* published by the Reverend Lal Behari De in his monthly journal called *The Bengal Magazine*

|| Mr Romesh Chandra Dutt of the Indian Civil Service, the well known author

§ The well known Bengalee weekly, *Somprakash* edited by Pundit Dwarkanath Vidyabhushan



though good for my friend of *Amrita Bazar [Patrika]*, suit ill the taste and breeding of our best literary magazine. But a truce to preaching.

I am growing very fond of the *Kerani*.\* His sketches are exquisite.

Tusting this will find you in the full swing of enjoyment in this enjoying season, I am,

Yours sincerely,  
Bankim Ch. Chatterji.

## XIV.

Malda,  
The 30th December [1874.]

My Dear Jagadish,

You write that you would be glad if I sent something for the Reunion. As I would do anything to make you glad, I immediately got down to write a poem for you. I received your note on the evening of the 28th, the post having been accidentally delayed for a few hours. I finished a few stanzas this evening, but sleep came on and I put it off to next morning.....

If I send it by to-morrow post you won't get it in time. So I think I must give up the idea of contributing to your pleasure.....

*Khani*† must, in my opinion, chasten down his style and curb his redundant flow of words and imagery, which at present obscures the meaning and wearies the reader. He should try to avoid too much rhetoric and ornament. Explain to him that clearness and simplicity are the best of all ornaments, and that I have arrived at this conviction after much painful experience. He should re-write his book with reference to these remarks.

\* \* \*

Yours affly  
Bankim Chandra Chattarji.

\* This refers to the serial article called "Reminiscences of a Kerani's Life" by Rai Bahadur Sashi Chandra Dutt. It created sensation in the official world and almost deprived its author of his pension.

† Khagendra Nath Ray, son of Jagadish Nath Ray. Ed.

## XV.

Chinsurah.  
July 15, 80.

My Dear Nāti,

I have read through your delightful poem,\*—and I was detaining it for the purpose of giving it a second perusal. As, however, the publication is being delayed, the second perusal may stand over till it is the property of the public.

The dedication of it would be an honour to any Bengali—and it is an honour which I certainly have done nothing to deserve. But as *undeserved* honours are the order of the day, I do not see why I should scruple to receive my share. So fire away, and glorify grandeur [? grandpa] to your heart's content.

I am afraid that History† is not likely to make much progress. I have, however, got through a few chapters and also through a novel‡—so to call it— but I have not the slightest idea when the latter will be ready for publication.

Tusting this will find you all serene,

I remain,  
Yours affectionately,  
Bankim Ch. Chatterji.

## XVI.

Jajpur, January 20th, 1883.

I return your manuscripts to-day in a registered parcel. I have read through them.

You have planned a new Mahabharat indeed—an exceedingly ambitious work, the most ambitious perhaps since the days of Haribansa and Adhatya Ramayana. It is nothing against the plan that it is ambitious. Provided you can execute it with the same grandeur as you have planned,

\* *Rangamati Kavya* of Nobin Chandra Sen, dedicated to Bankim Chandra. Ed.

† This refers to a history of India which Bankim intended to publish in Bengali. Ed.

‡ This refers to *Anandamath*. Ed.

you will perfectly justify yourself Properly executed the poem will of course take its rank as the greatest in the language

I warn you, however, not to be too confident of success Of popularity I cannot promise you much If executed adequately, many will probably consider it as the Mahabharat of the Nineteenth century—while others will take it to be a parody of the Mahabharat and I must assure you that an inadequate execution is likely to bring it down to the latter level

Lastly, will your poem be historically and politically true? I have advised you to keep clear of history, but I cannot advise you to run counter to history Even this you may do so far as individual characters are concerned But I am hardly bold enough to advise you to do so in the case of large national movements Now I believe it is not historically true, either that Krishna set himself up against Brahmanical authority (there was never a greater champion of it) or that the Brahmins ever coalesced with the Non Aryans, in order to put down the Kshatriyas

I must also tell you that the second canto (?) ( দ্বিতীয় ) has struck me as being a sort of parenthesis between the other two—the main action being carried on by the first and third The action in the second canto (?) is mainly the death of Abhimanyu and the only connection it has with the action of the poem is that it brings some personal misfortune to Krishna and Arjun But the death of Abhimanyu does not materially either retard or accelerate the main action or even its second stage, viz., the establishment of the empire, and it is therefore only an episode An episode ought not to take up one of the three cantos (?) to itself \*

\* It appears that the full text of this letter has not been printed by Mr Hirendra Nath Datta from whose article we have reproduced it Extracts from this letter as printed in Nobin Chandra's autobiography, *Amar Jitan* (iv 125-26) go to show that the following passage should come after the third paragraph of this letter —

"Blank verse is recognised as proper to Epic poetry in English—but it is certainly very unsuited to Bengalee epic M. S Dutta alone has been able to make something of it—but even his success has been achieved at a lamentable sacrifice of grammar, idiom and perspicuity Even in English, it gives to even such a poem as the 'Paradise Lost' a weary uniformity which makes it very dismal reading If you continue the poem, my advice is that you should change the রূপ at every chapter, and let it generally be rhyme"

In *Amar Jitan* (iv 126-27) we find that the letter ended with the following words —

## XVII.

13.5.83.

I do not quite understand why you should feel any diffidence in carrying on the 'Raibatak.' My own plan is never to seek the opinions of others, and as I have found by experience that my interference in the way of advice or criticism has spoilt many a fine work, I give none myself. It is a rule with me at present to pass no opinion on contemporary productions. Genius—even mere talent,—must work out its conception.

## XVIII.

Jajpur, Camp Burchora.

November 13/82.

My Dear Bhudeb Babu

I have received the পারিবারিক প্রবন্ধ. I should perhaps earlier have acknowledged the very kind words with which the present was accompanied, but I believe no thanks I could send would have been acceptable to you unless I could also send you my assurance that I have read through the book in 48 hours. I can say so now.

I write all this without any scruple because although the publication is anonymous, I believe you do not wish to keep the authorship a secret from me, and you would take me for a greater blockhead than I am if I pretended that I did not guess it. There is only one hand which could have produced the work; and the whole public is probably aware whose it is.

I take this opportunity of confessing to you—what perhaps few others will venture to tell you—that I have often felt hurt by your withholding your name from your writings. It has seemed to you that you feel reluctant to lend the honour of your name to such a thing as Vernacular Literature. In the present case the book rightly comes without a name. The most devout worship is that which is performed in secret. The whole book is one grand hymn to the holiest of human affections, and is best sung by an invisible chorister.

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" You will thus see I have thus tried to act towards you honestly and conscientiously. I do not write to dissuade you from the attempt—but I warn you of the difficulties. The old Mahabharat is so grand and has such a deep hold of your readers that only first class execution can make the new acceptable to them."

The highest poetry is also the highest practical wisdom—the poetry of real Life. There is more practical wisdom in Shakespeare's plays than in Bacon's Essays—or in any other English writings whatever. Many of my educated countrymen have no hesitation in admitting this as an abstract proposition, but very few of them realise it in life. I believe your little volume will enable many of them to do so, if they will resort to its pages. But most of them think it *infra-dig* to go to a Bengali book for instruction, even though that book be your writing.

I hope you will now do for our Social life what you have done for our Domestic life. The Social life presents the more unmanageable problem of the two. The inherent excellence of our domestic institutions, and the true greatness of our women preserve our domestic life from disintegration.

Yours affly  
Bunkim Ch Chatterji

## XIX

Byree, Jaipur  
The 22nd Nov [1882]

My Dear Bhudeb Baboo

I shall be happy to send you some notes of my feelings—I cannot call them thoughts—on the various social problems before us. But may I ask you what is the plan on which you propose to deal with the social questions—if you deal with them? I make the enquiry, because a knowledge of your plan may help me to explain myself better than I can without it. Social life is far more complicated than domestic life, and its aspects are so multifarious,—so numerous are the questions it presents for solution, that I do not think that either you or any other individual writer, can undertake its exhaustive treatment—You have therefore I dare say formed some plan, or intend to form some plan with the aid of which you propose to thread the labyrinth—some map or chart of the regions you propose to traverse. If I get a glimpse into that chart, I may be able to judge how far and in what manner I can follow you. In the meantime I will try to jot down a few notes regarding what is uppermost in my mind.

I had not space enough in my last letter to write of the delight with which I found that the পারিবারিক অবস্থা had been written in a style suited to all, and the price low enough to be within the means of most. This will I hope enable the book to find its way, as it ought to do, into every household where there are readers. It enables a man to make his life sweeter to himself and to others at the cost of eight annas only.

I hope Nyayaratna\* remembers me. I have not ceased to love and esteem his sweet character.

Yours very sincerely,  
Bunkim Ch. Chatterji.

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\* This refers to Ramgati Nyayaratna. Ed.

